

# PHILIPPIANS



## The Book of PHILIPPIANS TEXT, EXPOSITION AND PRACTICAL HELPS

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# THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, Philippians 1:3-30

## A. The Marks of a Healthy Church, Philippians 1:1-2

**(Philippians 1:1-2) Introduction:** this is a most unusual greeting to a church from Paul. He does not refer to himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Why? There was no need for him to defend his call from God. His relationship with the church at Philippi was just what it should be: a relationship founded and rooted in Jesus Christ and in the love and respect for each other. The church held its minister, Paul, ever so closely to its heart; they loved and cared for him as few churches love and care for their ministers. This greeting gives some outstanding distinctives of Christian believers.

1. **A healthy church disciples young people (v.1).**
2. **A healthy church serves Christ (v.1).**
3. **A healthy church is full of true saints (v.1).**
4. **A healthy church has leaders who lead by example (v.1).**
5. **A healthy church experiences grace and peace (v.2).**

### 1. (Philippians 1:1) Discipleship— Young People: a healthy church disciples young people.

In the words "**Paul and Timothy**" we see *a father and son in the faith*—the adult and the young person together. There was deep affection that bound Paul and Timothy together. That affection found its root and purpose in the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul contributed the wisdom of experience, and Timothy the hope and vibrant energy of youth. It should be noted that the adult, Paul, is mentioned first. The adult always holds the primary responsibility and privilege for taking hold of young people and making disciples of them. This was the command of the Lord's *great commission*; therefore, the believer must always keep his focus upon finding young people and making disciples of them (see note, **Discipleship—Matthew 28:19-20** for more discussion). (See **Deeper Study #1, Timothy—Acts 16:1-3** on page # 4 for discussion on Timothy's life.)

**"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching [making disciples] them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20).**

**"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).**

## Deeper Study #1, Timothy—Acts 16:1-3

**(Acts 16:1-3) Timothy—Discipleship:** Timothy was just a child when Paul visited Lystra on his first mission (about five or six years before). He was probably somewhere around ten to twelve years old. He was still a young man when Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy (**1 Tim. 4:12**). All this means Timothy was somewhere around eighteen years old when Paul met him on his second mission to Lystra.

It is also possible that Paul led Timothy to the Lord on his first mission tour, but it is more probable that Timothy's mother and grandmother led him to the Lord.

The present passage seems to read as though Paul did not know or remember Timothy from his first mission. In either case, his spiritual maturity at this point was strong enough for Paul to challenge him to join his mission corps. The facts of his life seem to be as follows.

Timothy's father was a Greek and an unbeliever, but his mother was a Jew and a believer. Her name was Eunice and his grandmother's name was Lois (**2 Tim. 1:5**). Timothy was not circumcised; hence it would seem that he was educated in Greek ways and customs (**Acts 16:3**). When Paul met Timothy, Timothy was already a Christian believer with a strong testimony, so strong in fact that Paul arranged for him to become his missionary partner (**Acts 16:1**). Timothy's maturity and importance are seen by the word "**he**" of **Acts 16:1** being changed very rapidly to "**they**" of **Acts 16:4**. Timothy became a son to Paul (**1 Cor. 4:17**).

He was esteemed so highly and loved so deeply by Paul that Paul said he was the one man whose mind was at one with his own (**Phil. 2:19**). He was probably chosen by Paul to become Paul's successor. From this point on, he was seen either ministering with Paul or else being sent out by Paul to minister to certain churches. He was with Paul in Paul's first imprisonment (**Col. 1:1; Philemon 1**). Apparently, Paul was released from prison and Timothy began to travel with him again. On this journey Paul left him in Ephesus to correct some errors that had arisen, while Paul himself traveled on into Macedonia to visit the churches there. Soon thereafter Paul was arrested and imprisoned in Rome a second time. As soon as possible Timothy joined him (**2 Tim. 4:11, 21**), but this time Timothy was imprisoned also. However, Timothy was later released (**Hebrews 13:23**), while Paul was either beheaded or released and began a mission tour into Spain.

## **2. (Philippians 1:1) Servants— Slaves (*doulos*): a healthy church serves Jesus Christ, really serves Him.**

The word "**servant**" (*doulos*) is the word *bond-slave* in Greek. There is a distinct difference between a servant and a slave. A servant is free to work for whomever he wishes; a slave is bought and purchased—completely and totally owned by a master. A slave is bound by law to his master.

Paul calls himself and Timothy the *slaves of Jesus Christ*. A look at the slave market of Paul's day shows more clearly what Paul meant when he said he was a "slave of Jesus Christ."

**1. The slave was owned by his master; he was totally possessed by his master.** This is what Paul meant. Paul was purchased and possessed by Christ. Christ had looked upon him and had seen his degraded and needful condition. And when Christ looked, the most wonderful thing happened: Christ loved him and bought him. Therefore, he was now the possession of Christ.

**2. The slave existed for his master and he had no other reason for existence.** He had no personal rights whatsoever. The same was true with Paul: he existed only for Christ. His rights were the rights of Christ only.

**3. The slave served his master and he existed only for the purpose of service.** He was at the master's disposal any hour of the day. So it was with Paul: he lived only to serve Christ—hour by hour and day by day.

**4. The slave's will belonged to his master.** He was allowed no will and no ambition other than the will and ambition of the master. He was completely subservient to the master and owed total obedience to the will of the master. Paul belonged to Christ. In fact, he even said that he fought and struggled to bring *every thought* into captivity "to the obedience of Christ" ([2 Cor. 10:3-5](#), esp. [2 Cor. 10:5](#)).

**5. There is a fifth and most precious thing that Paul meant by his being "a slave of Jesus Christ." He meant that he had the highest and most honored and kingly profession in all the world.** Men of God, the greatest men of history, have always been called "the servants of God." It was the highest title of honor. The believer's slavery to Jesus Christ is no cringing, cowardly, or shameful subjection. It is the position of honor—the honor that bestows upon a man the privileges and responsibilities of serving the King of kings and Lord of lords.

- a. **Moses** was the slave of God ([Deut. 34:5](#); [Psalm 105:26](#); [Malachi 4:4](#)).
- b. **Joshua** was the slave of God ([Joshua 24:9](#)).
- c. **David** was the slave of God ([2 Samuel 3:18](#); [Psalm 78:70](#)).
- d. **Paul** was the slave of Jesus Christ ([Romans 1:1](#); [Phil. 1:1](#); [Titus 1:1](#)).
- e. **James** was the slave of God ([James 1:1](#)).
- f. **Jude** was the slave of God ([Jude 1](#)).
- g. **The prophets** were the slaves of God ([Amos 3:7](#); [Jeremiah 7:25](#)).
- h. **Christian believers** are said to be the slaves of Jesus Christ ([Acts 2:18](#); [1 Cor. 7:22](#); [Ephes. 6:6](#); [Col. 4:12](#); [2 Tim. 2:24](#)).

**Thought 1.** The great need today is for men and women to become slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must become His slaves and do what He says. Then and only then will the world be reached with the glorious news of eternal life. Then and only then will the desperate needs of the world be met.

"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour" ([John 12:26](#); cp. [Romans 12:1](#); [1 Cor. 15:58](#)).

"[Laboring] not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" ([Ephes. 6:6-7](#)).

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" ([Col. 3:23-24](#)).

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" ([Hebrews 12:28](#)).

"And ye shall serve the Lord your God" ([Exodus 23:25](#)).

"What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" ([Deut. 10:12](#)).

"Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling" ([Psalm 2:11](#)).

"Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing" ([Psalm 100:2](#)).

### **3. ([Philippians 1:1](#)) Saints— Sanctified— Holy: a healthy church is full of true saints.**

The Bible never uses the word *saint* to refer to a few people in the church who have achieved unusual spiritual maturity. The word "saint" refers to the sanctified or holy ones. It simply means to be set apart and to be separated. Therefore, every believer who has truly trusted Jesus Christ as his Savior is separated from the world and set apart to live for God. Every true believer is a "saint," a person set apart unto God.

(See [Deeper Study #1—1 Peter 1:15-16](#) on page # 9 for more discussion.)

There are three stages of sanctification.

**1. There is initial or positional sanctification.** When a person believes in Christ, he is immediately set apart for God—once and for all—permanently.

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" ([Hebrews 3:1](#)).

"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" ([Hebrews 10:10](#)).

**2. There is progressive sanctification.** The true believer makes a determined and disciplined effort to allow the Spirit of God to set him apart day by day. The Spirit of God takes him and conforms him into the image of Christ more and more—for as long as he walks upon this earth.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" ([John 17:17](#)).

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" ([2 Cor. 3:18](#)).

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" ([Ephes. 5:25-26](#)).

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" ([1 Thes. 5:23-24](#)).

**3. There is eternal sanctification.** The day is coming when the believer will be perfectly set apart unto God and His service—without any sin or failure whatsoever. That day will be the great and glorious day of the believer's eternal redemption.

"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" ([Ephes. 5:27](#)).

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" ([1 John 3:2](#)).

**Thought 1.** We are the property of the Lord Jesus, set apart as His holy possession. Let us, therefore, live as the possession of the Lord. Let us walk as the separated people of God, living holy and righteous and pure lives.

**Thought 2.** Lehman Strauss points out the following (*Devotional Studies in Philippians*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1959, p.32f).

1) God is a thrice-holy God.

"And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" ([Isaiah 6:3](#)).

"And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" ([Rev. 4:8](#)).

2) The Lord Jesus Christ who saved us is *holy*.

"For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together" ([Acts 4:27](#)).

**"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus" ([Acts 4:29-30](#)).**

- 3) The Spirit of God who indwells our bodies is holy.

**"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" ([Acts 1:8](#)).**

- 4) The Bible, which is to be the guide of our lives, is called the Holy Scripture.

**"Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures" ([Romans 1:2](#)).**

- 5) One of the names given to us is that of *holy brothers*.

**"I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren" ([1 Thes. 5:27](#)).**

**"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" ([Hebrews 3:1](#)).**

- 6) One of the great gifts of God is to make us a *holy priesthood* before God.

**"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" ([1 Peter 2:5](#)).**

- 7) The great call of God to us is a *holy calling*.

**"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" ([2 Tim. 1:9](#)).**

- 8) The great purpose for the Lord's return is to present us *holy before God*.

**"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight" ([Col. 1:21-22](#)).**



- 9) One of the great inheritances we shall receive when the Lord returns is the *holy city*.

**"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" ([Rev. 21:2](#)).**

**In light of all that God has done for us.....**

- a. How can we do anything less than to live a sanctified, holy life before God?
- b. How can we be lethargic and complacent, sleepy-eyed, and unmotivated?
- c. How can we allow ourselves to live lives of routine and unconcern?
- d. How can we live lives of indulgence, license, selfishness, immorality, perversion, wickedness, and evil?

**"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [behavior] and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" ([2 Peter 3:10-12](#)).**

### **Deeper Study #1—1 Peter 1:15-16**

**(1 Peter 1:15-16) Holy— Saint— Sanctification:** (*hagios*): all three of these words and their various forms (holiness, saints, and sanctification) are translated from one Greek word *hagios*. Its Hebrew equivalent is *kadosh*. It is difficult to translate into English although its meaning is easy to grasp.

Its basic meaning is **“to be separated”, “set apart”, and “different”**. Morally, it means **pure, sinless, righteous, holy**. Something holy is set apart, separated, different from all other persons or things. It is something that God has set aside for Himself. Man cannot set it aside as holy. It has to be set aside by God Himself.

A study of the word *holy* shows the movement of God in history.

1. God is said to be preeminently and supremely holy ([Luke 1:49](#); [John 17:11](#); [1 Peter 1:15](#)). He possesses an incomparable majesty, so supremely majestic that there are beings who do nothing but surround His throne day and night singing out the praises of His holiness ([Isaiah 6:1](#); [Rev. 4:8](#)).

2. Things that have a special connection to God are said to be holy. The ground upon which Moses stood when God confronted him was said to be holy ([Exodus 3:1-5](#); [Acts 7:33](#)). The temple was said to be holy ([Matthew 24:15](#)), and the Holy of Holies in particular was holy ([Hebrews 9:2-3](#)). The mount where Christ was transfigured was

called holy ([2 Peter 1:18](#)). The covenant that God made with Abraham was holy ([Luke 1:35](#)). The gospel and Scriptures are called holy ([Matthew 7:6](#); [Romans 1:2](#)). Anything that becomes associated with God is set apart unto God in a very special sense and becomes different from other things.

3. The Jews are called a *holy nation* ([Exodus 19:6](#)). They were set apart in a very special way to God. The Old Testament deals primarily with the Jews and their special relationship to God: "Ye shall be holy unto me; for I, the Lord, am holy, and have separated you from other people, that ye should be mine" ([Leviticus 20:26](#); cp. [Daniel 7:18, 22](#)).

- a. The Jewish people were *holy* in that they were to be different from other nations, different in that they were to believe God and serve Him faithfully. God knew them in a very special way above all the nations of the earth.
- b. The Jewish priesthood was *holy*, different from other men ([Leviticus 21:6](#)). The people's tithe or tenth was *holy*, different from other money and goods and used for different purposes ([Leviticus 27:30, 32](#)). The temple was *holy*, different from other buildings ([Exodus 26:33](#)).

**But note this:** the Jews refused to play the part in history that God wanted them to play. The Old Testament is a continuous record of their rejection of God's will. And when God sent His Son into the world, they committed the supreme and lasting rejection. They refused to acknowledge Him and put Him to death.

4. Jesus Christ is said to be holy in a very special way.

- a. Before His birth, the angel said to Mary, "That holy One who shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" ([Luke 1:35](#)).
- b. Mary worshipped Him in song and praise before His birth saying, "Holy is His name" ([Luke 1:49](#)). He was the only begotten Son of God, *holy*, revered, and worthy of veneration and worship.
- c. The people recognized that He was *sanctified* by God ([John 10:36](#); [John 6:69](#)).
- d. The mentally ill and demon-possessed recognized Him as the Holy One of God ([Mark 1:24](#); [Luke 4:34](#)).
- e. The church worshipped Him as "the Holy Child of God" ([Acts 4:27, 30](#)).

**Note this:** Jesus Christ Himself was the transition from God's dealing with the Jewish nation as holy to a new people as holy. When the Jews rejected God's Son, they showed their ultimate refusal to follow God, to be holy and separated unto Him. Therefore, God had no choice but to raise up another people to be separated unto Him. The new people are those of all nations and peoples who believe and follow Christ as the Lord of their lives.

5. The church is now said to be the holy people of God. The privileges and responsibilities of following God were taken from Israel and given to the church ([John 17:14, 16](#); [Romans 11:16](#)).

- a. The church is called *a holy nation* and a *royal or holy priesthood*, a people made up of genuine believers from all nationalities and languages and races ([1 Peter 2:5, 9](#)).
- b. The church is a people who set themselves apart unto God as holy and separated and different, who utterly trust Him and abandon themselves to follow Him.
- c. The church is now the dwelling place for God's presence. Believers are being built "**together for a habitation of God through the Spirit**" ([Ephes. 2:21-22](#)). The church in some unique and spiritual sense, by an act of God, becomes the very body of Christ ([Ephes. 1:22-23](#)). The church, the body of believers when meeting together locally, now replaces the temple of the Old Testament.

6. But there is something even more precious and hallowed to real believers. The body of the individual believer becomes holy, for the Spirit of God dwells within the believer's body ([1 Cor. 6:19-20](#)). The body of the believer becomes the dwelling place for God's very presence, and the body replaces the holy of holies within the inner sanctuary of the temple. Thus, believers are called *saints or holy ones* ([Acts 9:13, 32, 41](#); [Acts 26:10](#); [Romans 1:7](#))

#### 4. ([Philippians 1:1](#)) Bishops—Deacons: a healthy church organizes for ministry and has leaders who lead by example.

Note that both *bishops* and *deacons* are mentioned as being in the Philippian church. What Paul is doing is addressing the leaders of the church and setting them apart from the membership whom he addressed as "**saints.**"

This is significant, for it means that the leadership or officers of the early church are here named: they were **bishops** and **deacons**. A complete discussion of these two offices is given elsewhere (see [Deeper Study #1, Bishop—Titus 1:5-9 on page #13](#); and [Deeper Study #2—1 Tim. 3:8-13 on page #14](#)). The point to see in this passage is that believers organize for ministry.

1. The bishops (*episkopois*) were apparently the same as the elders (*presbuteros*) or ministers of a church. The two words are used interchangeably to refer to the same men ([Acts 20:17, 28](#); [Titus 1:5, 7](#)). The word "**bishop**" means to oversee, look after, manage. The instructions in the Epistle of Titus say that his duties included primarily exhortation and overseeing the lives of the believers. The bishop was the person whom we call the minister of the church. (See [Deeper Study #1—Titus 1:5-9 for full discussion](#).)

2. The deacons (*diakonois*) were spiritually minded men who had dedicated their lives to the Lord to minister to the *saints* of God. They were persons who were chosen to minister to the widows and widowers and to the poor and sick of a church *in order to free the minister to concentrate on prayer and preaching*.

**But note a significant fact:**

- a. Preachers are sometimes called deacons, that is servants.

**"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers [*diakonoi*] by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" (1 Cor. 3:5).**

**"Who also hath made us able ministers [*diakonous*] of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. 3:6).**

- b. The first deacons preached as well as ministered to the needy of the church.

**"And Stephen [a deacon], full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people" (Acts 6:8).**

**"Then Philip [a deacon] went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them" (Acts 8:5).**

**Thought 1. Two significant points need to be stressed.**

1. The church must organize for ministry and must always be careful to ordain only persons who have proven to be spiritually mature in the Lord.
2. The two ordained officers of the church must be diligent in both their duty and in sharing the Word of the Lord. Every believer is needed to bear witness for the Lord Jesus and the *leadership must take the lead*. How can we expect others to be witnessing and ministering if we, the leadership, are not witnessing and ministering?

**"But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all" (Mark 10:43-44).**

**"She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying" (Mark 14:8).**

**"For unto whosoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48).**

**"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14).**

**"He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep" (John 21:16).**

**"For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Cor. 3:9).**

**"We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. 6:1).**

**"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).**

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" ([Hebrews 12:28](#)).

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ: to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever" ([1 Peter 4:11](#)).

## Deeper Study #1, Bishop—Titus 1:5-9

([Titus 1:5-9](#)) **Elder— Bishop**: note the term elder (*presbuteros*) and bishop (*episkopos*) are used interchangeably in this passage ([Titus 1:5, 7](#)). The elder or bishop was probably the same office as the pastor-teacher or minister of a church. The gift of pastor-teacher refers to only one gift which is given to the same person ([Ephes. 4:11](#)). The focus of the gift is to *pastor, oversee, and shepherd* believers in the local church. William Barclay points out that elder was more of a Jewish name and bishop was more of a Greek name, each referring to the same office (*The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p.80-81).

The word *elder* was used to refer to the man, to his standing, to his years of faithfulness and service. The word *bishop (episkopos—overseer)* and the gift *pastor-teacher* were used to refer to the man's duties and his work of overseeing and supervising the church. In comparison, a man today is often called minister, pastor, preacher, or reverend. Usually reverend is used to refer to the man personally and minister, pastor, or preacher is used to refer to the man's functions.

The pastoral gift is the gift that is directly ascribed to the Lord Jesus. He called Himself the Good Shepherd ([John 10:11, 14](#)). Others called Him the Great Shepherd of the sheep ([Hebrews 13:20](#)), the Shepherd of men's souls ([1 Peter 2:25](#)), and the Chief Shepherd ([1 Peter 5:4](#)). The pastoral gift is an ordained office; the elder is the basic office of the church.

1. Elders are called and set apart by the Holy Spirit ([Acts 20:28; Acts 13:2](#)).
2. Elders are ordained officers ([Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5](#)).
3. Elders shepherd and oversee the flock of God ([Acts 20:28-29; 1 Peter 5:2-3](#)).
4. Elders are to guard and preach the Word ([Titus 1:9](#)).
5. Elders have a healing ministry through prayers and the anointing with oil ([James 5:14](#)).
6. Elders took a leading part in the decisions of the Jerusalem Council. They are identified along with the apostles as the chief authorities of the church ([Acts 15:2; Acts 16:4](#)).
7. Elders are the ones to whom Paul reports when returning from his third missionary journey, and they are the ones who advise him how to combat the Judaizers ([Acts 21:18-25](#)).
8. Elders are the ones to whom Paul delivers the offering that had been taken for the Jerusalem Church during the great famine ([Acts 11:30](#)).

## Deeper Study #2—1 Tim. 3:8-13

**(1 Tim. 3:8-13) Deacons:** the word deacon (*Diakonous*) means servant, minister. The first reference to deacons is in Acts ([Acts 6:1-7](#)). Deacons were appointed to help in the ministerial and administrative duties of the church ([Acts 6:2](#)). Their function was to relieve ministers so that ministers could give themselves "**continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word**" ([Acts 6:4](#)). In particular they were chosen to minister to the day-to-day needs of believers and to the needs of widows and widowers and the poor and sick of a church. They were to relieve ministers so the ministers could *concentrate on prayer and preaching*.

**"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" ([Acts 6:3-4](#)).**

**However, note a significant fact:** this does not mean that ministers are never to meet day-to-day needs of believers nor that deacons should never share or preach the Word. In the early church both ministers and deacons served in both areas, but each *concentrated* upon their primary call and mission.

- a. Preachers were sometimes called deacons, that is, servants.

**"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers [diakonoi] by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" ([1 Cor. 3:5](#)).**

**"Who also hath made us able ministers [*diakonous*] of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" ([2 Cor. 3:6](#)).**

- b. The first deacons preached as well as ministered to the needy of the church.

**"And Stephen [a deacon], full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people" ([Acts 6:8](#)).**

**"Then Philip [a deacon] went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them" ([Acts 8:5](#)).**

- c. Deacons are closely linked to bishops.

**"Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" ([Phil. 1:1](#)).**

- d. Deacons are to be spiritually equipped for their task.

**"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" ([Acts 6:3](#); cp. [1 Tim. 3:8-13](#)).**

- e. The office of the deacon was an early development in the church.

**"And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" ([Acts 6:1-4](#)).**

**5. ([Philippians 1:2](#)) Grace— Peace: a healthy church experiences grace and peace** (see note, Grace—[Galatians 1:3](#); note—[Ephes. 2:8-9](#); note, Peace—[Galatians 1:3](#); and note—[Galatians 5:22-23](#) for discussion).

**([Galatians 1:3](#)) Minister— Grace— Peace**: the minister wishes the very best for other believers. The minister, Paul, wanted the believers of Galatia to experience the grace and peace of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Note again how the deity of Jesus Christ is proclaimed: He is placed side by side with God.)

1. **Grace (*charis*)** means the *undeserved favor and blessings* of God. The word *undeserved* is the key to understanding grace. Man does not deserve God's favor; he cannot earn God's approval and blessings. God is too high and man is too low for man to deserve anything from God. Man is imperfect and God is perfect; therefore, man cannot expect anything from God. Man has reacted against God too much.

**Man has.....**

- |                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| a. rejected God         | f. sinned against God |
| b. rebelled against God | g. disobeyed God      |
| c. ignored God          | h. denied God         |
| d. neglected God        | i. questioned God     |
| e. cursed God           |                       |

Man deserves nothing from God except judgment, condemnation, and punishment. But God is love—perfect and absolute love. Therefore, God makes it possible for man to experience His grace, in particular the favor and blessing of salvation which is in His Son, Jesus Christ.

**"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" ([Romans 3:24](#)).**

**"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" ([2 Cor. 8:9](#)).**

**"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace" ([Ephes. 1:7](#)).**

**"That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" ([Ephes. 2:7](#)).**

**"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 4:19](#)).**

**"And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" ([1 Tim. 1:14](#)).**

**2. Peace (*eirēnē*)** means to be bound, joined, and weaved together with God and with everyone else. It means to be assured, confident, and secure in the love and care of God.

**It means to have a sense, a consciousness, a knowledge that God will.....**

- |               |                         |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| a. provide    | f. deliver              |
| b. guide      | g. save                 |
| c. strengthen | h. give life, real life |
| d. sustain    | both now and            |
| e. encourage  | forever                 |

A person can experience true peace only as he comes to know Jesus Christ. Only Christ can bring peace to the human heart, the kind of peace that brings deliverance and assurance to the human soul.

**"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" ([John 14:27](#)).**

**"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" ([John 16:33](#)).**

**"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" ([Romans 5:1](#)).**

**"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" ([Romans 8:6](#)).**

**"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)).**

**"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord only makest me dwell in safety" ([Psalm 4:8](#)).**

**The point is this:** not everyone in the church was experiencing the grace and peace of God. Some had fallen from the grace of God, no longer trusting Christ to save them; they depended upon their own works and goodness to make them acceptable to God. As a result they did not have peace of heart. Some had even fallen into all forms of sin and shame ([Galatians 5:19-21](#)).



Others had become extremely critical and divisive, standing against Paul and any who supported Paul. **Note:** Paul wished the very best for the churches of Galatia—even for the false teachers and critics.

**He wanted everyone to experience...**

1. the grace of God by coming to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord.
2. the peace of God as they walked through life confronting all its struggles and trials.

**Thought 1.** Every minister should wish the very best for all believers, even for his critics and enemies. It might be difficult, but his very call to the ministry is to proclaim the grace and peace of God.

**Thought 2.** Believers must guard against falling from grace, guard against trusting their own works and goodness to save them and to make them acceptable to God.

# THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, Philippians 1:3-30

## B. The Marks of Mature Believers, Philippians 1:3-11

**(Philippians 1:3-11) Introduction:** What are the marks of a mature Christian believer? What are the marks of a dynamic, mature Christian church? This passage answers these questions. Concisely and clearly, the marks so desperately needed by believers and churches are spelled out.

1. **The mark of a thankful heart (v.3).**
2. **The mark of prayer (v.4).**
3. **The mark of joy (v.4).**
4. **The mark of fellowship (v.5).**
5. **The mark of confidence in God's salvation (v.6).**
6. **The mark of partnership (v.7-8).**
7. **The mark of a growing and discerning love (v.9-10).**
8. **The mark of righteousness (v.11).**

### 1. (Philippians 1:3) Brotherhood—Fellowship—Church: there is the mark of a thankful heart.

Paul did not stand alone in the world. He was not the only person living for God and sharing Christ. He belonged to a great family, a family of believers who constituted the family of God. They, too, were living for God and sharing Christ with a lost and needful world. Remember that Paul was in prison in Rome and that he was a great distance from the Philippian believers. He did not have their presence; all he had was the memory of their time together. And sitting there in prison, remembering their love and care and support, his heart swelled up with thanksgiving for them, and he thanked God for them.

**Thought 1.** What a lesson for us! If Paul thanked God for believers who were so far away from him, how much more should we thank God for each other. We have the love and care and support of each other week by week and day by day, and we can call upon each other for help any hour of any day. Yet how often do we thank God for each other?

Another point is this: we should be following Paul's example and thanking God for all believers every day. We are not alone in the world. God is building a body of people world-wide—a body of people who are just like us—committed to live for the Lord Jesus Christ and to carry His gospel of salvation and love and care to a world that reels under the weight of desperate need.

**"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12).**

**"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful" ([Col. 3:15](#)).**

## **2. ([Philippians 1:4](#)) Prayer: there is the mark of prayer.**

Paul says that he always prayed for the church. The idea is that he prayed all throughout the day for them. They were constantly on his mind and in his prayers. As Matthew Henry says, Paul prayed by name for all the churches he knew, and he had seasons of prayer for each church (*Matthew Henry's Commentary*, Vol.6. Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, no date listed, p.724.)

**Thought 1.** What a dynamic lesson in prayer!

- 1) To pray by name for all the churches we know.
- 2) To take blocks of time (seasons of prayers) to pray for each church.
- 3) To always—all day long—pray for the churches of our living Lord.

**"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" ([John 17:20](#)).**

**"For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you [the Roman church] always in my prayers" ([Romans 1:9](#)).**

**"[I] cease not to give thanks for you [the Ephesian church], making mention of you in my prayers" ([Ephes. 1:16](#)).**

**"For this cause [the church] I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" ([Ephes. 3:14](#)).**

**"We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you [the church]" ([Col. 1:3](#)).**

**"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" ([Col. 4:12](#)).**

**"We give thanks to God always for you [the church] all, making mention of you in our prayers" ([1 Thes. 1:2](#)).**

## **3. ([Philippians 1:4](#)) Joy: there is the mark of joy.**

Remember that Paul is in prison, yet his heart is filled with joy. Joy (*chara*) means an inner gladness; a deep seated pleasure. It is a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful and rejoicing heart. It is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful and rejoicing behavior.

The joy of the Lord is not the same as the joy of the world. The joy of the world is more of a temporary pleasure than joy. The world's joy is always nagged by some incompleteness, some lack, some unfulfilling thing, some missing ingredient, some need still existing. There is not a completeness—not a complete sense of assurance, confidence, and satisfaction. There is the knowledge, *the haunting awareness*, that something can go wrong: circumstances can change or some situation can arise to disturb

the joy (sickness, death, financial loss, war). The haunting awareness always keeps the world's joy from being full and complete, assuring and satisfying.

**Several things need to be said about the believer's joy.**

1. Joy is divine. It is possessed and given only by God. Its roots are not in earthly or material things or cheap triumphs. It is the joy of the Holy Spirit, a joy based in the Lord. It is His very own joy ([John 15:11](#); [Acts 13:52](#); [Romans 14:17](#); [Galatians 5:22](#); [1 Thes. 1:6](#)).
2. Joy does not depend on circumstances or happiness. Happiness depends upon happenings, but the joy that God implants in the believer's heart overrides all, even the matters of life and death ([Psalm 5:11](#); [2 Cor. 6:10](#); [2 Cor. 7:4](#)).
3. Joy springs from faith ([Romans 15:13](#); [Phil. 1:25](#); [2 Tim. 1:4](#); [Matthew 2:10](#)).
4. Joy of future reward makes and keeps the believer faithful ([Matthew 25:21, 23](#); [Acts 20:24](#); [Hebrews 12:2](#)).

**The source of the believer's joy is several-fold.**

1. The fellowship of the Father and His Son brings joy ([1 John 1:3-4](#)).
2. Victory over sin, death, and hell brings joy ([John 14:28](#); [John 16:20-22](#)).
3. Repentance brings joy ([Luke 15:7, 10](#)).
4. The hope of glory brings joy ([Romans 14:17](#); [Hebrews 12:2](#); [1 Peter 4:13](#)).
5. The Lord's Word—the revelations, commandments, and promises which He made—brings joy ([John 15:11](#)).
6. The commandments of Christ and the will of God bring joy. Obeying and doing a good job stirs joy within the believer's heart ([John 15:11](#); [John 17:13](#); [Acts 13:52](#)).
7. Prayer brings joy ([John 16:24](#)).
8. The presence and fellowship of believers brings joy ([1 John 1:3-4](#)).
9. Converts bring joy ([Luke 15:5](#); [Phil. 4:1](#); [1 Thes. 2:19-20](#)).
10. Hearing that others walk in the truth brings joy ([3 John 1:4](#)).
11. Giving brings joy ([2 Cor. 8:2](#); [Hebrews 10:34](#)).

**"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" ([Romans 14:17](#)).**

**"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" ([1 Peter 1:8](#)).**

**"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" ([Psalm 16:11](#)).**

**"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" ([Isaiah 12:3](#)).**

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels" ([Isaiah 61:10](#)).

#### 4. ([Philippians 1:5](#)) Fellowship: there is the mark of fellowship.

Note two significant points.

1. The source of fellowship is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great salvation of God. The gospel of Christ is the glorious news that He has died for our sins, risen again, and conquered death that we might live with God eternal-ly, never having to die ([1 Cor. 15:3](#)).

Christian believers have *fellowship*, a spiritual bond, a spiritual union because.....

- a) they have experienced the *same salvation*, the salvation of God.
- b) they have embraced the *same faith*.

Forcefully stated, *genuine believers*—believers who have totally committed their lives to the gospel of Christ—live and proclaim the gospel. Therefore, true believers are bound together around the gospel—all living the same kind of life and doing the same kind of things. They live, serve, and bear witness to the same Lord; therefore, their lives are bound together in the Spirit of Christ and His fellowship.

2. The fellowship of believers is to exist from the very first day of salvation. What a glorious testimony of the Philippian church had! It had been about ten years since some of the members had given their lives to follow Christ and had founded the church. And note: the fellowship of the church had continued from the very first day of its founding. As all churches experience, there must have been differences and problems which had arisen, but the believers handled them *in Christ*—just as they should have. Therefore, the peace and unity of the Spirit was kept alive and the fellowship of the church remained strong.

**Thought 1.** One of the most critical needs facing the church today is the need for peace and unity in the Spirit of God—a strong fellowship rooted around the gospel of Christ. Lehman Strauss gives the secret: "There was no conflict, no confusion, but continuance. A continuing fellowship is a *prayer fellowship*. Today a very narrow conception of fellowship prevails. If we attend the same church, recite the same creed, say the same prayers, eat at the same church supper, and socialize with the same crowd, we call this Christian fellowship. But is it? For years I have watched all of these things going on among professing Christians where there was often little conception of *true fellowship in the gospel*. Among Christians there may be difficulties and disappointments along the way, but never a disruption where there is *prayer fellowship*" (*Devotional Studies in Philippians*, p.42).

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" ([Acts 2:42](#)).

"That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me" ([Romans 1:12](#)).

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" ([1 John 1:7](#)).

"I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts" ([Psalm 119:63](#)).

"Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name" ([Malachi 3:16](#)).

## **5. ([Philippians 1:6](#)) Power, God's— Confidence— Assurance: there is the mark of confidence in God's salvation.**

God will complete His good work in believers. Confidence and assurance are two of the striking traits of genuine believers. Believers know God, know Him personally. God's Spirit actually lives within the heart and body of the believer ([John 14:16-17](#); [John 14:26](#); [1 Cor. 6:19-20](#); etc.). The Spirit of God actually bears witness with the spirit of the believer, that he is going to be redeemed someday—presented perfect before God. In fact, the presence of the Holy Spirit within the believer's body is the very guarantee of the believer's salvation ([2 Cor. 1:22](#); [2 Cor. 5:5](#); [Ephes. 1:14](#)).

1. The believer has absolute confidence in the work of salvation or redemption which God has begun in his life. He has confidence through the presence of God's Spirit who dwells within him.

2. The work begun by God is a good work; that is, it is a work that revolutionizes or radically changes the life of the believer. No matter what kind of life a person was living, once God converts him, the new believer begins to live a *good life* :

*a life of.....*

- a) righteousness, purity, and holiness.
- b) love, joy, and peace.
- c) faith, humility, and control.

3. The good work is incomplete as long as the believer lives on this earth. He is never perfected, not while a man. There is always work for God to do; therefore, God is always working within the life of the believer to mature him more and more. God is always working to make the man more and more pure and more and more faithful in his service to the Lord Jesus.

4. The good work is to be completed when Jesus Christ returns to this earth. At that time, the believer will be transformed into a perfect man and given a perfect body. He

will become a perfect man who will live in the new heavens and earth with Christ. And he will worship and serve the Lord Jesus in perfection throughout all eternity.

**"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" ([John 17:11](#)).**

**"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" ([Phil. 1:6](#)).**

**"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 4:7](#)).**

**"...I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" ([2 Tim. 1:12](#)).**

**"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" ([2 Tim. 4:8](#)).**

**"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" ([1 Peter 1:5](#)).**

**"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness [the Holy Spirit] in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son" ([1 John 5:10](#)).**

**"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever" ([Jude 24-25](#)).**

**"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" ([Rev. 3:10](#)).**

**"And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" ([Genesis 28:15](#)).**

**"O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful" ([Psalm 31:23](#)).**

**"For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever" ([Psalm 37:28](#)).**

**"The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands" ([Psalm 138:8](#)).**

## 6. (Philippians 1:7-8) Sympathy— Service— Ministry: there is the mark of "Christian partnership"

(Barclay, William. *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*. "The Daily Study Bible." Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1957, p.21.)

Note how closely bound together Paul and the church were.

1. They were **partners in heart**. Paul loved them as he loved himself; he held them ever so dear to his heart and they constantly filled his thoughts.
2. They were **partners in the sufferings** of Paul.

**This means.....**

- a) that they were sympathizing with Paul in his imprisonment.
- b) that they were sending hope to Paul while he was in prison.
- c) that they had or were themselves suffering because of the gospel just as Paul was.

**The point is this:** the affection between Paul and the Philippians was so tender that their hearts went out to each other. What one experienced, the other felt, even the sufferings of each other.

**Thought 1.** What a striking picture of the kind of sympathy needed for those who suffer. We must learn to be partners in suffering. Then and only then can we bear each other's burdens and truly minister to each other.

**"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" ([Romans 15:1](#)).**

**"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" ([Galatians 6:2](#)).**

**"Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" ([Hebrews 2:17-18](#)).**

**"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" ([Hebrews 4:15-16](#)).**

**"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body" ([Hebrews 13:3](#)).**



3. They were **partners in the gospel**. The Philippians had not given up the gospel, nor had they become silent or complacent in sharing the gospel. They were actively defending and proclaiming the truth of the gospel. The church and its members were busy for Christ—actively bearing witness to the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were taking the great commission of our Lord seriously.

**"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)).**

**"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" ([Mark 16:15](#)).**

**"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" ([Acts 1:8](#)).**

**"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" ([Acts 4:20](#)).**

**"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" ([2 Tim. 1:8](#)).**

**"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" ([1 Peter 3:15](#)).**

4. They were **partners in the grace of God**. Paul was expressing the wonderful grace of God—the favor and blessings of God. And the Philippian church was expressing the same grace. God was pouring the richest blessings upon both Paul and the church. Why? What was it that was causing God to so richly bless these two? Their faithfulness: as this passage shows, they were bearing the marks of mature believers.

**"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" ([Ephes. 1:7](#)).**

**"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 4:19](#)).**

**"And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" ([1 Tim. 1:14](#)).**

**"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" ([2 Tim. 2:1](#)).**

5. They were **partners with Christ**. The word "**bowels**" (**splagchnois**) means tender mercies, compassion, deep affection. **And note:** it is the tenderness of Jesus Christ that Paul says he has for the Philippians. He longs for them with the very affection and tenderness of Christ Himself.

**Thought 1.** How desperately the minister and church need such tenderness and affection for each other! What a tremendous difference would exist in churches if believers held each other ever so tenderly—held each other with the tenderness and affection of Christ Himself.

**Thought 2.** The great need of the church today is for partnership—partnership among its members. Believers desperately need to become partners with each other and with the minister of God:

- a) partners in heart
- b) partners in suffering
- c) partners in proclaiming and defending the gospel
- d) partners in the grace of God
- e) partners with the Lord Jesus Christ

**"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" ([John 13:34-35](#)).**

**"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" ([John 15:12](#)).**

**"Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" ([Romans 12:9](#)).**

**"Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone" ([1 Thes. 3:1](#)).**

**"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" ([1 Peter 1:22](#)).**

## **7. ([Philippians 1:9-10](#)) Love: there is the mark of a growing and discerning love.**

**Note this:** love in the Bible never focuses upon *good feelings*. Feelings may and usually do come to the person who truly loves another person, but feelings are never the focus—not with true love.

### **What then is the focus?**

- 1) The focus of love is knowledge. If we truly love someone, we want to know that person. In fact, we want to know all we can about the person.
- 2) The force of love is judgment (*aisthēsei*). The word means intelligence or discernment. If we truly love someone, we not only want to know a person but we want to learn all we can about the person. We want to gather all the intelligence and facts possible and discern them so that we can please the person.

**Note that Paul wants the believer's love to grow more and more.** We need to know more and more about Christ and each other; we need to gather more and more understanding, more and more discernment, more and more intelligence about each other. The more we know about Christ and each other, the more our love for each other will grow.

**There are three reasons why we need a love that grows more and more.**

**1. A growing love is needed to approve things that are excellent.** It is not enough just to know what is right and wrong. It is not enough just to do what is right. Sometimes the choice is between the good and the excellent, the acceptable and the best. Only a growing love will stir us to choose the excellent and the best.

- a) The more we love the Lord, the more we will choose the excellent and best for Him.
- b) The more we love each other, the more we will choose the excellent and best for each other. A growing love will not want to do anything that would even come close to causing a person to stumble.

**2. A growing love is needed to be sincere and pure.** The word “**sincere**” (*eilikrineis*) means to sift about through a sieve in order to make pure. Therefore, the word means pure, uncontaminated, not polluted, untainted. Note that we are to stay pure until the return of Christ. Only a growing love will keep our eyes focused upon Christ. If we do not love Him, we will not look to Him. If we love Him, we will keep our eyes fastened upon Him, longing to see and be with Him. Only love—true love—will keep us pure waiting for His return.

**Thought 1.** A good illustration of this point is found in the young lady who loves the soldier and is awaiting his return. If she truly loves him, she will keep her eyes fastened upon him and keep herself pure.

**3. A growing love is needed to keep us from causing others to stumble.** We must always guard against being an “**offense**” (*aproskopi*) or a stumblingblock to others. **Note:** we must be willing to choose the best and the excellent for the sake of others.

**We may be able to control, but others may not be able to control.....**

- a. drinking
- b. television
- c. social functions
- d. the latest fashion and dress
- e. dancing
- f. movies
- g. eating
- h. makeup

The list could go on and on with almost everything we do. We must control everything we do, not slipping over into the questionable—sometimes not even doing the acceptable and good, but we must choose the best. Approve only the things that are excellent. **Why?**

- a) To keep from causing a brother to stumble.
- b) To offer up to the Lord the very best we can. This point should *break our hearts*. Just think how often we have chosen to do less than the best for our Lord. We have offered up to Him behavior, words, thoughts, deeds, works that were second best—and we knew it! How His heart must have been cut—especially when He went to the ultimate limit in loving and giving Himself for us.

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" ([Luke 9:23](#)).

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" ([Romans 12:1-2](#)).

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" ([Romans 14:21](#)).

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" ([1 Cor. 6:19-20](#)).

"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" ([1 Cor. 10:24](#)).

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" ([Matthew 19:21](#)).

## 8. ([Philippians 1:11](#)) Righteousness: there is the mark of righteousness.

Righteousness (*dikaioσunē*): means two simple but profound things. It means both *to be right and to do right*.

1. There are those who stress *being righteous and neglect doing righteousness*.

This leads to two serious errors.

- a. **False security.** It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he has *believed in* Jesus Christ. But he neglects doing good and living as he should. He neglects obeying God and serving man.
- b. **Loose living.** It allows one to go out and do pretty much as he desires. He feels secure and comfortable in his *faith in Christ*. He knows that what he does may affect his fellowship with God and other believers, but he thinks his behavior will not affect his salvation. He thinks that no matter what he does he is still acceptable to God.

The problem with this stress is that it is a false righteousness. Righteousness in the Bible means *being righteous*, but it also means *doing righteousness*. The Bible knows nothing about being righteous without living righteously.

2. There are those who stress *doing righteousness and neglect being righteous*.

This also leads to two serious errors.

- a. Self-righteousness and legalism. It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he does good. He works and behaves morally and keeps certain rules and regulations. He does the things a Christian should do by obeying the main laws of God. But he neglects the basic law: the law of love and acceptance—that God does not love him and accept him because he does good, but because he loves and trusts the righteousness of Christ.
- b. Being judgmental and fault-finding. A person who stresses that he is righteous (acceptable to God) because he keeps certain laws often judges and finds fault with others. He feels that rules and regulations can be kept, he keeps them. Therefore, anyone who fails to keep them is judged, criticized, and censored.

The problem with this stress is that it, too, is a false righteousness. Again, righteousness in the Bible is *being righteous as well as doing righteousness*. The Bible knows nothing of being acceptable to God without *being made righteous in Christ Jesus*.

**"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" ([Matthew 5:20](#)).**

**"Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame" ([1 Cor. 15:34](#)).**

**"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" ([2 Cor. 5:21](#)).**

**"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness" ([Ephes. 6:14](#)).**

**"Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" ([Phil. 1:11](#)).**

**"But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" ([1 Tim. 6:11](#)).**

**"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" ([Titus 2:12-13](#)).**

# THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, Philippians 1:3-30

## C. The Marks of a Mature Witness, Philippians 1:12-19

**(Philippians 1:12-19) Introduction:** circumstances often throw and defeat people. The maturity of a person can be seen by how well he handles the things that happen to him—the things that affect a person with mood changes ranging from mild to severe. The one thing that a believer must do is to learn to live above circumstances—to keep his witness for Christ strong and mature. **This is the subject of the present passage: the marks of a mature witness.**

1. **He shares the gospel regardless of circumstances (v.12-14).**
2. **He holds no personal jealousy nor desire for credit or prestige (v.15-18).**
3. **He possesses the assurance of a happy ending: salvation (v.19).**

### 1. (Philippians 1:12-14) Witnessing— Believer: a mature witness shares the gospel regardless of circumstances.

**Note two significant points.**

1. **Paul faced dark circumstances: he was a prisoner in Rome.** The dark circumstances stared Paul right in the face. No circumstances could ever be any more severe—no matter what they were. Paul was waiting to appear before the Supreme Court of Rome: he was facing a trial before Nero, the Roman Emperor, and he was innocent. He had done nothing that should cause his arrest and imprisonment. Yet there he was, and he was having to wait the arrival of his Jewish prosecutors with their trumped-up and malicious charges. True, he had some privileges—renting his own house and receiving friends—but these privileges were minor when the strains of his sufferings are seen. He was imprisoned for over two years, and as is the case with all prisoners, the days wore on ever so slowly—hour by hour and day after day.

**Whatever pressures hang over a man's head who is awaiting a trial that is to determine whether he lives or dies hung over Paul's head.** As he says in Ephes. 3:13, his tribulations were intense and protracted.

**But note something: Paul.....**

- a) did not grumble and complain
- b) did not question God and wonder why
- c) did not whine and murmur
- d) did not fall to pieces
- e) did not curse God nor give up his faith

**2. Paul used his dark circumstances to spread the gospel.** Paul did not see himself as a prisoner of Rome nor of Nero. He saw himself as a prisoner *for Jesus Christ*. He did not see himself as a victim; he saw himself as a conqueror for Jesus Christ. In [Acts 28:20](#) Paul says he was "**bound with this chain,**" and in [Ephes. 6:20](#) he calls himself an "**ambassador in bonds.**" The word "**halusis**" is used. The "**halusis**" was a small length of chain that bound a prisoner to the wrist of a guard to prevent his escape. Just imagine! Paul was bound to a Roman guard every day and night for over two years. What do you suppose Paul talked about with the guards? He tells us: "**The things which happened to me have fallen out to the futherance of the gospel.**"

- a. Paul spread the gospel through the *Praetoria Guard*, the elite of the Roman army. These soldiers were the Imperial Guard of Rome, men who had been hand-picked to protect the emperor and to carry out the major armed functions of the state. There were sixteen thousand of them, most of whom were stationed in Rome at any given time ([Barclay, \*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians\*, p.26](#)). It was these soldiers who guarded and were chained to the wrist of Paul day and night for two years—young men who were the elite of Roman youth. How many Paul led to the Lord is unknown.

**But note: Christ was shared so much that the gospel spread throughout.....**

1. the whole Praetorian guard.
2. the palace of the emperor.
3. all other places.

Paul—his imprisonment and stand for Christ and the gospel which he preached—became the conversation throughout Rome, the conversation among all the social circles including the upper strata, the very palace of the emperor himself.

**Thought 1.** The lesson for us is this: we must never let circumstances get us down—never let them defeat our testimony and witness for Christ, **no matter what they are.....**

- |                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| a. persecution    | h. bankruptcy          |
| b. accident       | i. sin                 |
| c. failure        | j. loss of a loved one |
| d. financial loss | k. rejection           |
| e. divorce        | l. abuse               |
| f. imprisonment   | m. poverty             |
| g. age            | n. poor health         |

If we are living for Christ, we must know that God is in control of our lives. He will strengthen us to bear whatever circumstances fall upon us. We must use the circumstances to witness to the saving power of Christ—to the eternal hope He gives of forgiveness and of living forever.

**We must witness to all around us when we.....**

1. lie in the bed of sickness
2. are in the midst of death
3. are facing money problems
4. are being abused and persecuted

And if we have sinned and failed—no matter how terribly—we must repent and get back to the task of witnessing, overcoming the circumstances of having failed and sinned so much. We must do all we can to conquer the circumstances for Christ and continue to witness, sharing all the good we can in order to reach all we can. All must be done for Christ, for He is worthy. He has died for us, bearing our sin and punishment and freeing us to live perfectly before God for all eternity. The world does not know this—the world does not know that the cure for the cancer of sin is now available. They cannot know unless we tell them. We must share the good news—share it *regardless of circumstances*.

**We must always remember:**

1. we conquer circumstances for Jesus Christ.
2. we are not the victim of circumstances; we are the conquerors of circumstances—all for Jesus Christ.
3. we are not to allow our circumstances to discourage others; we are to use our circumstances to encourage others.

**b.** Paul spread the gospel by encouraging other believers to be more fearless in witnessing. How was this possible?

**Note several things.**

1. Paul's dynamic witness and the converts among the Imperial guard were being noised about all over the city. Of course, the new converts among the soldiers were beginning to share Christ.
2. Paul's fellow ministers who visited him (Timothy and others) were sharing news about Paul and witnessing themselves.
3. Paul was allowed visitors. While a prisoner, many of the believers throughout Rome visited him and he shared Christ with them—boldly shared Christ. Note what is said:

**"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" ([Acts 28:30-31](#). Read the brief account for an encouraging picture of just how much Paul shared the gospel—no matter his circumstances, [Acts 28:17-31](#).)**



Paul's dynamic witness made a strong impact upon all those around him. His strong witness, despite his terrible circumstances, stirred *many* believers to become much more confident in their own witnessing. Many of the believers began to witness wherever they were—no matter their circumstances.

**"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" ([Mark 16:15](#)).**

**"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" ([Luke 19:10](#)).**

**"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" ([John 20:21](#)).**

**"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" ([Acts 1:8](#)).**

**"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" ([Acts 4:20](#)).**

**"We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak" ([2 Cor. 4:13](#)).**

**"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" ([2 Tim. 1:8](#)).**

**"These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee" ([Titus 2:15](#)).**

**"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" ([1 Peter 3:15](#)).**

## **2. ([Philippians 1:15-18](#)) Faithfulness— Jealousy— Self-seeking: a mature witness holds no personal jealousy nor desire for credit or prestige.**

This is a strange experience shared by Paul, yet it is an experience that is so often and tragically repeated in the church and among believers.

**Some preachers in Rome were jealous of Paul and envious.....**

- a) of the results he was having.
- b) of the favorable attention and prestige he was gaining from society and the social circles of the community.
- c) of the support and loyalty believers were giving him.
- d) of the attention he was receiving from so many of their members.
- e) of the position he was gaining as the leader of the Christian community in Rome.

**Note:** the preachers were true followers of Christ. They were not the Judaizers, the false preachers who sometimes followed and opposed Paul. These were genuine preachers who were ministers in and around the metropolis of Rome. We know this because Paul agreed with their preaching; he just regretted their opposition to him. Instead of supporting him, they were speaking out against him, hoping to silence his influence and to get rid of him ([Phil. 1:16](#)).

However, not all the preachers throughout Rome opposed Paul. Some were preaching Christ out of love, and they were encouraging their members to show their love for Paul by visiting and supporting him in his ministry of proclaiming Christ.

**Thought 1.** How often has this scene been repeated? How many are repeating the scene right now?

**How many believers and Christian workers are jealous and envious.....**

- a) of the position of someone else?
- b) of the attention, support, and loyalty that someone else receives?
- c) of the results that another worker is having?

How many of us begin to question and speak against a Lord's servant because of these things—speak quietly perhaps to only one or two others; nevertheless, we do speak out? God forgive us!

We must always remember: we are *all* ministers and workers if we have been truly called by Christ to preach and teach His gospel. Each one has his call, and no matter the call, the road is always difficult. Therefore, we must support each other. The Lord does not require *big ministries* and *big names* and *big followers* from us all. What he requires is faithfulness—only faithfulness in the ministry to which he has called us. Therefore, let us be *faithful* and support all the ministers of the gospel of Christ.

**"Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me" ([John 21:21-22](#)).**

**"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" ([1 Cor. 4:1-2](#)).**

**"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" ([2 Cor. 4:5](#)).**

**"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre [personal gain], but of a ready mind" ([1 Peter 5:2](#)).**

**"His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter" ([Isaiah 56:10-11](#)).**

**"And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" ([Jeremiah 3:15](#)).**

**"Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord" ([Jeremiah 23:2](#)).**

**"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" ([Ezekiel 34:2](#)).**

### **3. ([Philippians 1:19](#)) Deliverance: a mature witness possesses the assurance of a happy ending—that of deliverance.**

Again, remember Paul's circumstances: he was in prison, but he was, as always, preaching Christ. No matter his circumstances, he was always preaching Christ; and because he was so faithful to his call, God was honoring his preaching. Tremendous results were occurring: unbelievers from all over were being saved, and believers were being encouraged to step forward and become bolder witnesses for Christ. The result was that everyone throughout all of Rome, believers and non-believers, were talking about Paul, esteeming and holding him ever so highly in their minds. However, some were beginning to show so much attention and support and loyalty to him that some of the local preachers were becoming nervous, jealous, and envious, so they began to speak out against Paul and his ministry.

**The point of the present verse is this:** Paul is sure God will save and deliver him from their criticism and opposition.

#### **He is sure of God's help and deliverance because of two things:**

1. There was the prayer of those who supported him—both those in Rome and those around the world who were praying for him daily. Note that he was writing to the Philippians, so he knew they would begin to pray for him immediately, and God answered their prayer. Therefore, he knew that God would deliver him from such antagonistic opposition because the Philippians were praying for him even if no one else was.

**Thought 1.** What a glorious teaching for a church—a church so strong in the Lord that the answer to its prayers are always answered.

2. The supply of the Holy Spirit would deliver him. Paul knew that the Holy Spirit would supply whatever he needed to get through his circumstances. No matter what our need is nor how great our need is, the Holy Spirit will deliver us. Strauss points out why the Holy Spirit has been given to believers, and Paul knew the reasons; therefore, he knew that he would be delivered (*Devotional Studies in Philippians*, p.79).

a. The Holy Spirit was given to be our compassion.

**"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" ([John 14:16](#)).**

b. The Holy Spirit was given to counsel us.

**"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" ([John 14:26](#)).**

c. The Holy Spirit was given to give us courage for witnessing no matter the circumstances.

**"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning" ([John 15:26-27](#)).**

d. The Holy Spirit was given to put conviction in our lives and ministry.

**"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" ([John 16:7-8](#)).**

e. The Holy Spirit was given to share the deep things of God with us.

**"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" ([1 Cor. 2:9-10](#)).**

f. The Holy Spirit was given to pray and intercede for us and to help us pray.

**"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh**

intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" ([Romans 8:26](#)).

- g. The Holy Spirit was given to bear His fruit in us.

**"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)).**

- h. The Holy Spirit was given to fill us and to put a song and joy in our hearts despite circumstances.

**"...be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" ([Ephes. 5:18-19](#)).**

- i. The Holy Spirit was given to give us assurance that we are children and heirs of God.

**"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" ([Romans 8:16-17](#)).**

# THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, Philippians 1:3-30

## C. The Marks of the Great Christian Believer, Philippians 1:20-26

**(Philippians 1:20-26) Introduction:** if a man has ever lived a life of commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ, it was Paul. Remember, he was in prison facing a capital crime with his deliverance looking almost hopeless. Death was staring him in the face. This passage is one of the great passages of Scripture. **Phil. 1:21** has been adopted by many believers as their life verse. Many have committed their lives to pursue either **Phil. 1:20** or **Phil. 1:21**.

This is the personal testimony of Paul: the marks of the great Christian believer.

1. **One great expectation and hope: to magnify Christ in his body (v.20).**
2. **One great commitment in life and death: Christ (v.21).**
3. **One great dilemma: to live or to depart to be with Christ (v.22-23).**
4. **One great willingness: to serve sacrificially (v.24-26).**

### 1. **(Philippians 1:20) Believer, Purpose— Hope: the great Christian believer has only one great expectation and hope—to magnify Christ in his body.**

1. Note the words "**earnest expectation**" (*apokaradokian*). It means to gaze into the distance with the head erect and outstretched just like a watchman on a tower. It is aiming one's attention at an object with concentration, eagerness, and intensity. It is turning the eyes away from everything else and focusing upon one object and one object alone. It is total concentration upon a person's desire.

2. Note what Paul's expectation and hope was. Remember Paul was in prison being charged with a capital crime which carried with it the penalty of death. The one hope of most prisoners would be release from prison or else to have the death penalty reduced to a lesser punishment. But note Paul's "**earnest expectation and hope**": to magnify Christ in his body. Paul's mind was not upon his terrible plight and circumstances; it was upon Christ—upon magnifying Christ in his body.

**As a prisoner he wanted to guard his body from.....**

- a) wondering and questioning God
- b) becoming discouraged and depressed
- c) becoming complacent and lethargic
- d) becoming inactive and undisciplined
- e) denying and turning away from God
- f) reacting and cursing God

Paul knew the weakness of the human body, how it tended toward doubt, questioning, self-centeredness, pride, boasting, self-satisfaction, indulgence, extravagance, habit, lethargy, complacency, laziness, enslavement, bondage, and neglecting and ignoring God. Since his conversion, Paul had totally committed himself to magnifying Christ. And there was only one place where Christ could be *magnified and seen*: that was in his body. The only place that men can see Jesus Christ living is in the body or life of a person. Jesus Christ was no longer on the earth; therefore, He could not be seen unless Paul and others allowed Christ to magnify Himself through their bodies. Paul knew this; therefore, he gave his body to Jesus Christ.

3. Note the reference to "**by life, or by death.**" Paul was facing death. He did not know if he was going to die or continue living. If he was to be executed, he wanted to be as faithful as ever and to magnify Christ in death. If he was to be declared innocent and set free, he wanted to continue to magnify Christ in his body.

4. Note why Paul wanted Christ to be magnified in his body: that he might not be ashamed in anything. Paul knew that he was going to face the same thing that every believer is to face: the judgment seat of Christ. He knew that everyone of us has to give an account for what we have done with our bodies while on earth. In fact, Lehman Strauss points out that it had been only about four years earlier that Paul had written the piercing words (*Devotional Studies in Philippians*, p.81):

**"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).**

When believers face Christ in judgment, the experience will not necessarily be peaches and cream.

a. There will be some believers who will be ashamed.

**"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2:28).**

b. There will be some believers who will suffer loss and look like a burned out building.

**"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3:13-15).**

**This is what Paul meant:** he did not want to be ashamed when he stood before Christ. He loved Christ with all of his heart, for Christ had done so much for him. Therefore, his one expectation and hope was for Christ to be magnified in his body. He wanted Christ to be honored both in his life and in his death. Above all, he did not want to be ashamed when he stood before his wonderful Lord.

**"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" ([Luke 9:23-24](#)).**

**"Neither yield ye your members [bodily parts] as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" ([Romans 6:13](#)).**

**"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" ([Romans 12:1-2](#)).**

**"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" ([1 Cor. 6:19-20](#)).**

## **2. ([Philippians 1:21](#)) Believer, Purpose: the great Christian believer has one great commitment in life and death—Jesus Christ.**

Paul declares two phenomenal statements:

1. First, "To me to live is Christ." What did he mean by this?

### **He meant at least five things.**

- a. He presented his body as a living sacrifice to Jesus Christ.

**"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" ([Romans 12:1](#)).**

- b. He struggled to yield the parts of his body—every member of his body—to Christ as a tool for righteousness.

**"Neither yield ye your members [bodily parts] as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" ([Romans 6:13](#)).**



- c. He struggled to control his mind—to control every thought and to focus every thought upon Jesus Christ and the great virtues of life.

**"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" ([2 Cor. 10:5](#)).**

**"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" ([Phil. 4:8](#)).**

- d. He committed himself to work for love and justice within all of society.

**"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" ([Matthew 7:12](#)).**

**"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" ([Matthew 22:39](#)).**

- e. He gave his life—every moment of it—to reach and minister to as many people as possible during his journey upon earth.

**"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" ([John 20:21](#). Cp. [Matthew 20:28](#) and [Luke 19:10](#), the two verses below.)**

**"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" ([Matthew 20:28](#)).**

**"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" ([Luke 19:10](#)).**

**"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" ([Acts 1:8](#)).**

**Thought 1. What does life mean to you? Why are you living? What is your great purpose in life?**

- a. Are you living for money and possessions (clothes, houses, cars, property)? If so, what do you do in a few years when you die—if you escape accident or disease? What do you do if you lose it? When that day comes—and it is coming, there is nothing in heaven or earth that can stop it—if you have lived for money, what good will it do you?
- b. Are you living for comfort (a good job, a nice place to live, plenty to eat, and enough money to do what you desire now and at retirement)?

If so, what happens when disease or accident or tragedy strikes or old age comes? And one or the other is coming. It cannot be stopped. If you have lived for comfort, what good will it do you?

- c. Are you living for a position? If so, what do you do when you are edged out, removed, demoted, transferred, by-passed, face disease or accident? What good will position do you?
- d. Are you living for family? If so, what do you do when the family has transferred, moved away, or when the various family members die? And it happens to everyone of us. What good will family do you when you face Christ?
- e. Are you living for recognition, honor, popularity, recreation, gratification, sensuality—whatever? What do you do when you face the crises of life and then in the end come face to face with death? At that moment if not before, what good will anything on this earth do you?

2. This brings us to the second point of Paul. He declares that "to die is gain." He knew better than to base his life upon these things. He knew that everything upon earth was aging and passing away including man himself. Therefore, Paul reached out for a Savior, a Person who could save him and give him an eternal world that would never age or pass away. This is the reason he grabbed hold of Christ. Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son whom God sent into the world to reveal the truth of another world to us, a world that is permanent and that has no corruption—no aging—no passing away in it.

**Therefore, Paul grabbed hold of Christ when he found out.....**

- a) that Christ saved men from sin, death, and condemnation.
- b) that Christ made it possible for men to live forever with God in a new heavens and earth.

**"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" ([John 3:16](#)).**

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" ([John 5:24](#)).**

**"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" ([Romans 14:8](#)).**

**"For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" ([2 Cor. 4:11](#)).**

**"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" ([Galatians 2:20](#)).**

**"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" ([Phil. 1:21](#)).**

**"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" ([Hebrews 11:13](#)).**

**"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" ([2 Peter 3:13-14](#)).**

**"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" ([1 John 3:14](#)).**

**"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" ([Rev. 21:1](#)).**

### **3. ([Philippians 1:22-23](#)) Believer, Life: the great Christian believer has one great dilemma—to live or to depart and be with Christ.**

The word "depart" (*anulusai*) is descriptive. It has a **twofold meaning** that speaks to the believer's heart.

1. It means to break up; to loosen as in breaking camp and loosening the ropes of the tent. It is the picture of breaking loose; packing up; and moving on to a new location. The same picture is true of the believer when he departs this life. He is not ceasing to exist; he is simply breaking loose and moving on to a new campsite, in fact, a perfect campsite.

2. It means to loosen the moorings of a ship, weigh anchor, and set sail for another port. Again, the believer does not cease to exist, he simply loosens the moorings of this life, pulls the anchor up, and sets sail for God's eternal presence.

#### **Paul says that he is caught between two great desires:**

- a. One desire is to live a life of fruitful service for the Lord Jesus Christ.
- b. The other desire is to depart and go on to be with Christ which is far better.

The natural mind wonders and questions how a person in his right mind could ever want to go ahead and die. The reason is simply answered: the genuine believer does not die; he never tastes death. He is transferred into the presence of Christ. Immediately—quicker than the blinking of an eye—the believer is transported into the perfect world of God which is named heaven. The believer is perfected—never again to experience pain, suffering, sin, corruption, infirmity, weakness, deformity, disappointment, fear, loss, or death. He will be perfected to work for Christ throughout the new heavens and earth, and he will serve and worship Christ for ever and ever.

The promises of God to the believer are phenomenal; they just explode the human mind. It is for this reason that the believer can declare: **"To die is gain."**

- a. There is the promise of never dying and of living forever with Christ.

**"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" ([John 3:16](#)).**

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" ([John 5:24](#)).**

**"[God's grace] is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" ([2 Tim. 1:10](#)).**

- b. There is the promise that is most dear to the heart of every faithful believer, the promise of being with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself forever and ever.

**"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" ([John 14:2-3](#)).**

**"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" ([2 Cor. 5:8](#)).**

**"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" ([1 Thes. 4:16-17](#)).**

- c. There is the promise of receiving a glorious body just like our Lord's glorious body.

**"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" ([1 Cor. 15:50-53](#)).**

**"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" ([Phil. 3:21](#)).**

**"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" ([Col. 3:4](#)).**

**"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" ([Matthew 13:43](#)).**

d. There is the promise of being made an heir of God.

**"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" ([Romans 8:16-17](#)).**

e. There is the promise of ruling and reigning with Christ forever and ever.

**"His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" ([Matthew 25:23](#)).**

**"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth the light; and they shall reign for ever and ever" ([Rev. 22:5](#)).**

Promise after promise could be listed, and reason after reason could be given as to why the faithful believer sometimes aches to go on to be with the Lord. As Barclay so aptly says, it will be a glorious day of *union and reunion*—a glorious day of union with our wonderful Lord and a glorious day of reunion with all our loved ones who have gone on ahead of us (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.34). The only word that can adequately express all that God has prepared for us who know Him is the word that is the same in all human languages: *Hallelujah!*

**"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" ([Matthew 24:44](#)).**

**"Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning" ([Mark 13:35](#)).**

**"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding" ([Luke 12:35-36](#)).**

#### **4. ([Philippians 1:24-26](#)) Believer—Ministry: the great Christian believer has one great willingness—to serve sacrificially.**

This is an interesting statement by Paul. Sitting there in prison waiting for the trial which would determine whether he lived or died, something happened to Paul. Either through thinking about the needs that existed in the world and in the churches, or through some sense from the Holy Spirit, Paul became convinced that he would be found innocent of the false charges and released from prison. But note why: it was not for his sake and enjoyment of life, but so that he could continue to minister.

The point to see is Paul's heart—how it longed to reach people for Christ and to meet the needs of a world that reels under the weight of desperation.

**"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" ([Romans 14:19](#)).**

**"Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" ([Romans 15:2](#)).**

**"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" ([Ephes. 4:11-12](#)).**

# THE MARKS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, Philippians 1:3-30

## E. The Marks of the Great Christian Church, Philippians 1:27-30

**(Philippians 1:27-30) Introduction:** Paul was in prison. He faced a capital crime and there was a strong chance he might be executed. He did not think so, but there was a possibility. He was not sure if he would ever see the Philippian church again, so he sat down and began to write to them. What would you say if you were writing to a group of God's people for the last time? One of the subjects that concerned Paul was the subject of this passage: the marks of a great church. The Philippian church was a great church, and Paul wanted it to remain great. Therefore, he reviewed with them the marks of a great Christian church.

1. **Mark 1: Christian conduct—heavenly citizenship (v.27).**
2. **Mark 2: honoring the gospel (v.27).**
3. **Mark 3: standing fast (v.27).**
4. **Mark 4: courage and fearlessness (v.28-30).**

### 1. (Philippians 1:27) Citizenship, Heavenly— Believers, Duty: the first mark of a great church is Christian conduct or heavenly citizenship.

The word "**conversation**" or "**conduct**" (*politeuesthe*) is significant. **A.T. Robertson** points out that this word is used only twice in the New Testament (**Acts 23:1; Phil. 1:27**) (*Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.4, p.441*). Usually, when the New Testament refers to behavior or conduct, it uses a word meaning how a person should walk about day by day (*peripatein*). But Paul switches the word in writing to the Philippians. Why? The reason is significant. As stated in the introductory material, Philippi was a proud Roman colony. In fact, it was famous as a miniature Rome. A city became a Roman colony by one of two ways.

At first Rome founded colonies throughout the outer reaches of the Empire to keep the peace and to guard against invasions from barbaric hordes. Veteran soldiers, ready for retirement, were usually granted citizenship if they would go out and settle these colonies. Later on, however, a city was granted the distinctive title of a Roman Colony for loyalty and service to the Empire. The distinctive thing about these colonies was their fanatic loyalty to Rome. The citizens kept all their Roman ties: the Roman language, titles, customs, affairs, and dress. They refused to allow any infiltration of local influence whatsoever. They totally rejected the influence of the world around them. They were Roman colonists within an alien environment.

This is the reason Paul uses the word *politeuesthe*. It means conduct and behavior, but more accurately it means the conduct and behavior of *citizenship*, of a person who is the citizen of a great nation. The Philippian church knew exactly what Paul was saying: they were citizens of heaven.

**Therefore, they must.....**

- a) keep their close ties with heaven.
- b) speak the clean and pure language of heaven.
- c) bear the title of heaven, Christian, and do so proudly.
- d) bear witness to the customs of heaven.
- e) carry on the affairs of heaven.
- f) dress as a citizen of heaven.
- g) allow no infiltration of worldly influence whatsoever.
- h) live and conduct themselves as a heavenly colony within a polluted and dying environment.

**"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ" ([Phil. 1:9-10](#)).**

**"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" ([1 Tim. 4:12](#)).**

**"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation [behavior, conduct] his works with meekness of wisdom" ([James 3:13](#)).**

**"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" ([2 Peter 3:10-13](#)).**

## **2. ([Philippians 1:27](#)) Church— Believers: the second mark of a great church is honoring the *gospel*.**

The word "**becometh**" or worthy (*axiōs*) means to fit, correspond, be suitable, be worthy.

**The believer's behavior is to.....**

- a) fit the gospel he professes.
- b) correspond to the gospel he professes.



- c) be suitable to the gospel he professes.
- d) be worthy of the gospel he professes.

No church and no believer within the church is to bring dishonor to the gospel. If a person professes the gospel he is to live worthy of the gospel. His conduct and behavior is to fit and correspond to the gospel he professes.

Lehman Strauss points out that this is the picture of clothing which is so often stressed by Scripture (*Devotional Studies in Philipians*, p.94). We often say that some piece of clothing is becoming to a person. What we mean is that the clothing matches and enhances the person's looks and personality. The same with the gospel of Christ. If we put on the gospel, we are to wear the gospel. Scripture declares:

**"Adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things" (Titus 2:10).**

**"But now ye also put off [as clothing] all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:8-10).**

**"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness" (Col. 3:12-14).**

### **3. (Philippians 1:27) Steadfastness— Church: the third mark of a great church is standing fast.**

Remember that Paul was in prison, awaiting trial on a capital charge. There was a chance he would be executed for a false crime. He thought he would be released, but he was not absolutely sure. Therefore, whether he was able to return to the church or not, there was a much needed exhortation that the church must heed: the exhortation to stand fast.

1. The church must stand fast in *unity*: "**in one spirit, with one mind.**"
  - a. *One spirit* means that all the members of a church must be born again by the Spirit of Christ. All members must have a renewed spirit from the same source, from the same Person. They must all be committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. They must all have a heart given to Him.
  - b. *One mind* means that all members must be set upon the same purpose; they must all be focused upon the purpose of Jesus Christ.

**The point is this:** the world—its people, families, and nations—may be split and divided, arguing and differing, fussing and feuding, fighting and divorcing, warring and killing, seeking and grasping; but the church is not to live that way. The church is to be unified; it is to be one in spirit and one in mind; one in heart and one in purpose.

**"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).**

**"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor. 13:11).**

**"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephes. 4:3).**

**"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1:27).**

**"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:3-4).**

**"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8).**

2. The church must stand fast in striving together for the faith of the gospel. The word **"striving together"** (*sunathlountes*) is the word taken from an athletic contest. It is the picture of a team working and struggling together against strong opposition (compare a football team). The church—every member of it—is to strive for the faith of the gospel: strive, work, struggle, push, exert all the energy possible; everyone cooperating together, not a single person letting up or turning aside or walking off the field. The opposition is difficult; therefore, the faith of the gospel needs every member working and struggling together.

**"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).**

**"This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus 1:13).**

**"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1 Peter 5:8-9).**

**"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness" (2 Peter 3:17).**

**"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" ([Jude 3](#)).**

#### **4. ([Philippians 1:28-30](#)) Courage— Persecution: the fourth mark of a great church is courage and fearlessness.**

Being a Christian believer in a corrupt world is hard. People oppose our stand for Christ and righteousness. It may be next door, in the office, at school or a hundred other places—**the Christian believer is sometimes.....**

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>a.</b> avoided    | <b>i.</b> ignored    |
| <b>b.</b> ridiculed  | <b>j.</b> neglected  |
| <b>c.</b> mocked     | <b>k.</b> overlooked |
| <b>d.</b> isolated   | <b>l.</b> by-passed  |
| <b>e.</b> cursed     | <b>m.</b> slandered  |
| <b>f.</b> questioned | <b>n.</b> persecuted |
| <b>g.</b> abused     | <b>o.</b> imprisoned |
| <b>h.</b> mistreated | <b>p.</b> martyred   |

**Note the exhortation:** we are not to be terrified by our adversaries.

##### **There are four reasons why.**

**1.** Persecution is a sign that the persecutors are doomed. And note: it is a sign *to them*. The Spirit of God is able to take their persecution of us and convict their hearts of the evil they are doing. Their persecution of a fellow human being strikes the fact of doom and judgment to their hearts: it convicts them, and by that conviction they stand a better chance of being saved.

**2.** Persecution is a sign of salvation for us. Of course, it is not the only sign, but it is one sign. If a believer stands fast in persecution, it is a clear sign that he is being strengthened by the Spirit of God and is a true believer.

**3.** Persecution is a privilege, not a terror. When we are persecuted, we are suffering for Christ, the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. Christ is not some *insignificant rebel*, some *leader of men* hiding out in some remote spot who embarrasses us and of whom we should be ashamed. Christ is the Son of God, the Lord of lords, the God of the universe, the Sovereign Majesty of all. It is a privilege to be numbered among His followers and to represent Him. If we happen to be cornered by some who oppose and rebel against Him, we are not to deny Him, nor be ashamed to own His name. We are not to be terrified by persecution. It is the highest honor imaginable to represent and serve the Lord God of all. He is coming soon to subject all opponents and enemies and to rule and reign over all. We could have no greater privilege than preparing the way for Him—even if some do oppose us.

4. Paul (and others) had left the church a dynamic example to follow in bearing persecution. Paul had been arrested, beaten, and jailed when he was in Philippi; and the church had witnessed the whole scene. He bore it all for Christ. Therefore, we are to follow in his steps and bear whatever persecution is launched against us—all for Christ. The great Christian soldier can bear it—through the presence and power of Christ—bear it as a great Christian soldier for Christ.

**"But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues" ([Matthew 10:17](#)).**

**"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake" ([Matthew 24:9](#)).**

**"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also" ([John 15:20](#)).**

**"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" ([Phil. 1:29](#)).**

**"That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto" ([1 Thes. 3:3](#)).**

**"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" ([2 Tim. 3:12](#)).**

**"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified" ([1 Peter 4:12-14](#)).**

**"Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" ([1 Peter 4:16](#)).**

**"All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me" ([Psalm 119:86](#)).**

# THE STEPS TO UNITY, Philippians 2:1-18

## A. Christ—The Traits of His Life in Us, Philippians 2:1-4

**(Philippians 2:1-4) Introduction:** the Philippian church was a strong church—a very strong church. When a church is strong, it is always full of vision and planning, and it is always working out a strategy to carry forth the gospel. A strong church launches ministry after ministry and program after program. It is never still and never complacent—neither the minds of the people nor the hands of the people. Because of this, there is always the danger of differences of opinion: differences in vision, desires, concern, emphasis, and interest. There are always different ideas as to which ministry or project should be undertaken and supported and a host of other differences.

**The point is this:** the more strength and activity a church has, the more attention it must give to unity. Why? Because a strong church has more minds and bodies working, and where more people are working more differences are bound to arise. Consequently, the members must give more attention to unity.

Paul knew this; he knew that he had to put the Philippian church on guard. The church had to protect itself against disunity and division. This is the subject of **Phil. 2: The Steps to Unity (Phil. 2:1-18)**.

The first step to unity is Christ—allowing His life to be lived out in us. In particular there are seven traits that will hold the church together and keep it unified.

1. **The trait of consolation (v.1).**
2. **The trait of love (v.1).**
3. **The trait of fellowship in the Spirit (v.1).**
4. **The trait of compassion (v.1).**
5. **The trait of concern for one another's joy (v.2).**
6. **The trait of humility or lowliness of mind (v.3).**
7. **The trait of controlling self-interest or concentration upon oneself (v.4).**

### 1. **(Philippians 2:1) Consolation— Encouragement: there is the trait of consolation (*paraklēsis*).**

The word means many things throughout Scripture; but in the present context it means encouragement, comfort, solace, exhortation, and strengthening. Note that this trait is a characteristic of Christ Himself. The very beat of His Spirit is to encourage, comfort, and strengthen believers to be one in spirit and busy about the ministry of His church. Christ wants no murmuring, no grumbling, disturbance, or weakening of the unity within the church.

**The Spirit of Christ is to take the disturbed or upset person and.....**

- a) console him
- b) comfort him

- c) encourage him
- d) strengthen him

Now glance at the charge of [Phil. 2:2](#):

⇒ "Be likeminded"—be just like Christ: **console, comfort, encourage, exhort, and strengthen** each other.

Let absolutely nothing interfere with the spirit of unity in the church. But note, we are not only to help those who are disturbed, we are to let the comfort and encouragement of Christ flow in us when we are disturbed. When disturbed, we are to let Christ comfort us; and when others are disturbed, we are to comfort them. Just imagine the spirit of unity that would flow through a church if all the members would let the consolation of Christ flow through them. There would be no murmuring, grumbling, disturbance—no disunity whatsoever.

**"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" ([John 14:18](#)).**

**"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do" ([1 Thes. 5:11](#)).**

**"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God" ([Isaiah 40:1](#)).**

## 2. ([Philippians 2:1](#)) Love: there is the trait of love.

There is a comfort (*paramuthion*) of love that is in Christ. The love of Christ stirs a person to keep the unity with other believers. The word "love" is *agapē love*, the love that is selfless and sacrificial. *Agapē love* is the love of the mind, of the reason, and of the will.

**It is the love that goes so far.....**

- a) that it loves a person even if he does not deserve to be loved.
- b) that actually loves the person who is utterly unworthy of being loved.

*Agapē love* is the love of Christ, the love which He showed when He gave and sacrificed Himself for us. We did not deserve it and were utterly unworthy of such love, yet Christ loved us despite all.

Imagine the spirit of unity that would exist within a church if every member would let the love of Christ flow through him. There would be no bitterness, anger, or strife—no action that would hurt another person whatsoever. If the person was wrong and deserved punishment, the church's members would sacrifice and give themselves for him.

Note [Phil. 2:2](#):

⇒ "Have the same love"—the same love Christ had for you.

**Thought 1.** This is the answer to unity: the Lord's spirit of love! How desperately the church needs its members to let the love of Christ flow through them to each other!

**"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" ([John 13:34-35](#)).**

**"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" ([John 15:12](#)).**

**"Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" ([Romans 12:9](#)).**

**"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you" ([1 Thes. 3:12](#)).**

**"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" ([1 Peter 1:22](#)).**

### **3. ([Philippians 2:1](#)) Holy Spirit, Fellowship: there is the trait of fellowship in the Spirit.**

Once a person has trusted Jesus Christ as his Lord, God's Spirit **does two significant things to him.**

- a. The Holy Spirit enters the believer's heart and life to comfort, guide, teach, equip, and use him as a witness for Christ.
- b. The Holy Spirit creates a spiritual union between the new believer and other believers. He melts and moulds the heart of the believer to the hearts of other believers. He attaches all their lives together, and they become one in life and purpose. They have a joint life sharing their blessings and needs and gifts together—all focused upon their Lord and His purpose.

The mind of the Holy Spirit is set upon unity and fellowship—all centered around Jesus Christ and His mission. The church and its believers are to have the same mind. There are to be no discordant elements whatsoever in the church: no talk about differences; no sharing of bad news; no gossip, rumors, cliques, nothing whatsoever that would tamper with or disturb the fellowship of the Spirit in the church.

Again, quickly glance at [Phil. 2:2](#):

⇒ **"Be of one accord"**—keep the unity of the Spirit, the fellowship of the Spirit.

#### 4. (Philippians 2:1) Compassion: there is the trait of compassion.

Compassion is the trait that stirred Christ to reach out for us. Compassion is the force that drives Him to keep after us time and again—even if we are in rebellion and stand opposed to Him. We may be cantankerous; we may even curse Him and take up arms against His movement. But His compassion drives Him to stay after us so long as we live.

If we allowed His compassion to flow through us, can you not see what would happen in the church?

**What would happen if we were driven by compassion to go after those.....**

- a) who have been hurt?
- b) who differed?
- c) who withdrew?
- d) who have been disturbed?
- e) who were critical?

The list could go on and on. But just think how many would have already been reconciled back into the fellowship of the church if we had been compassionate and gone after them. Just think how much less trouble would have happened if we had reached out in *compassion* when a difference first appeared.

**The point is this:** we are to let the compassion of Christ flow both in and through us. His compassion will comfort us when we differ and are disturbed; it will stir us to reach out in compassion when others differ and become disturbed. The compassion of Jesus Christ flowing in and through us keeps the unity of the church. It will also keep our minds together—keep them focused upon the needs of a world that must be reached and ministered to in compassion.

**"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" ([Romans 15:1](#)).**

**"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" ([Galatians 6:2](#)).**

**"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" ([Hebrews 4:15-16](#)).**

**"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" ([1 Peter 3:8](#)).**

**"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" ([Psalm 103:13](#)).**

**"In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old" ([Isaiah 63:9](#)).**



## 5. (Philippians 2:2) Joy: there is the trait of joy.

The believers in a church are to be concerned for each other's joy. And note: the one thing that brings joy to a church quicker than anything else is unity.

**"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Phil. 2:2).**

Paul's point is simple but direct: his joy in Christ would be fulfilled by only one thing—the unity of the Philippian church. The leaders and members of a church usually have joy in Christ, but their joy can be fulfilled only if unity exists between them. Joy is always disturbed when there is criticism, dissatisfaction, grumbling, murmuring, cliques, opposition, and a host of other divisive negatives. We are to **worship, plan, organize, program, build, staff, finance, minister, and serve in the joy of Christ.**

**But the only way we can do that is.....**

- a) to be likeminded.
- b) to have the same love.
- c) to be of one accord.
- d) to be of one mind.

**"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11).**

**"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24).**

**"For the kingdom of God [the church] is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17).**

**"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).**

**"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor. 13:11).**

**"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephes. 4:3).**

## 6. (Philippians 2:3) Humility— Lowliness of Mind: there is the trait of humility or lowliness of mind.

**Note two significant points.**

1. A strong and active church will always have two problems to stick their ugly heads up: *strife and empty glory*.

- a. Some people are just going to *strive* with others.

**They are not mature in the Lord, not yet; therefore, they give in to.....**

- |                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. talking about differences | e. desire for position    |
| b. jealousy                  | f. desire for recognition |
| c. envy                      | g. opposition             |
| d. loving flattery           | h. forming cliques        |

If they do not get their way or what they want, they strive against the church or other members. The result is disunity and divisiveness, one of the most terrible crimes within the church to God.

**"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" ([Phil. 2:3](#)).**

**"Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers" ([2 Tim. 2:14](#)).**

**"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" ([2 Tim. 2:24](#)).**

**"But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth" ([James 3:14](#)).**

**"Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm" ([Proverbs 3:30](#)).**

**"It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling" ([Proverbs 20:3](#)).**

**"Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame" ([Proverbs 25:8](#)).**

**"He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears" ([Proverbs 26:17](#)).**

- b. Some people are going to *seek glory* within the church. But note what Scripture calls it: vainglory, which means empty glory. Some people just want the attention, the recognition, the position, the flattery, the praise, the honor. They want people seeking their advice and counsel and opinion. They want to be on the major committees and acknowledged as a leader of the church.

**"And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" ([Matthew 23:12](#)).**

**"And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest" ([Luke 22:24](#)).**

**"How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" ([John 5:44](#)).**

**"He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction" ([Proverbs 17:19](#)).**

**"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High" ([Isaiah 14:13-14](#)).**

**"Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord" ([Obadiah 4](#)).**

2. The spirit that must prevail in a strong church is that of humility or lowliness of mind. In fact, the only way a church can remain strong and be blessed by God is for its people to walk in a spirit of humility.

**7. ([Philippians 2:4](#)) Humility: there is the trait of controlling self-interest** or what Barclay calls concentration on self (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.40). Very simply, a Christian believer must forget himself.

**He must quit looking upon his own things, his.....**

- |                         |                                 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. ambition             | g. being neglected              |
| b. desires              | h. being overlooked             |
| c. position             | i. being ignored                |
| d. not being recognized | j. not being given the position |
| e. not being honored    |                                 |
| f. wants                |                                 |

Believers are to concentrate upon Christ and His ministry to people and reaching the world with the glorious gospel of salvation. They are not to be focused upon self. The world is too needful and too desperate for any believer to be focused upon himself. Every believer is needed to reach the lost and lonely, the shut-ins and helpless, the hungry and cold, the sinful and doomed of his community and city, country and world. Every believer does not need to be thinking on his own things, but on the things of others.

**He needs to be out.....**

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| a. visiting     | g. sharing    |
| b. ministering  | h. feeding    |
| c. helping      | i. clothing   |
| d. transporting | j. counseling |
| e. listening    | k. planning   |
| f. advising     | l. teaching   |

**"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" ([Matthew 19:21](#)).**

**"I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not" ([Matthew 25:43](#)).**

**"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" ([Luke 9:23-24](#)).**

**"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" ([1 Cor. 10:24](#)).**

**"Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" ([1 Cor. 10:33](#)).**

**"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" ([2 Cor. 8:9](#)).**

**"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" ([Phil. 2:4](#)).**

# THE STEPS TO UNITY, Philippians 2:1-18

## B. Humbling One's Self, Philippians 2:5-11

**(Philippians 2:5-11) Introduction:** this is one of the greatest passages ever written about Jesus Christ. It paints the perfect picture of humility—the humility of Jesus Christ. No one has ever come close to humbling himself like Jesus Christ did, and no one ever will. Yet, if the problems of the church and of the world are to ever be solved, we must humble ourselves just as Christ did. The church is too often divided, too often rumbling with criticism, murmuring, differences, jealousy, envy, ambition, outside talk, negative feelings, and desires for position and recognition. The only answer is the declaration of this passage: humility—letting the humility of Jesus Christ flow in and out of our minds. Humility is the second step to unity. The unity of a church depends upon one thing: its members walking in humility—in the humility of Jesus Christ.

1. **Christ is the supreme example (v.5).**
2. **Christ is of the very nature of God (v.6).**
3. **Christ emptied Himself and became a man (v.7).**
4. **Christ humbled Himself to the point of utter humiliation—to the very point of death (v.8).**
5. **Christ was rewarded—highly exalted by God (v.9-11).**

### 1. **(Philippians 2:5) Jesus Christ, Humility: Jesus Christ is the supreme example of humility.**

As stated, this is one of the greatest passages ever written about Jesus Christ. Very simply, the passage says that Jesus Christ is God, yet He humbled Himself and became Man. Jesus Christ is the Person who dwelt in all the glory of perfection, but He humbled Himself and came to this corruptible world that knows little else other than selfishness, greed and death. Just imagine the enormous step down that Jesus Christ had to take to become a Man. It is utterly impossible to grasp the humility it took. Yet, this is exactly what He did and it is what we are to do. The very same mind that existed in Jesus Christ—that led Christ to give up everything He was and had—that very mind is to be in us. The only way the problems of the world can be solved is for every person to let the mind of Christ flood his mind.

**Consider the problems of.....**

- |                 |                |               |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------|
| a. war          | j. selfishness | s. greed      |
| b. hate         | k. pride       | t. disease    |
| c. anger        | l. cockiness   | u. stealing   |
| d. arguing      | m. haughtiness | v. jealousy   |
| e. abuse        | n. arrogance   | w. envy       |
| f. prejudice    | o. cursing     | x. immorality |
| g. indulgence   | p. hunger      |               |
| h. extravagance | q. homeless    |               |
| i. hoarding     | r. poverty     |               |

The list could go on and on. How can these problems ever be solved unless we step down from where we are to where needy people are? Unless we step down and humble ourselves—step down to where hurting people are—these problems will never be solved. Realistically, most people are not going to do this. Most people are not going to take all they are and have and get down to where the needs really are. But the Christian is to do this. **This is the point of the present passage:** Jesus Christ *set* and *focused His mind* upon humbling Himself. He took all He was and had and came down where we are and met our need.

Now.....

**"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."**

Take the mind of Christ and let it flow through you. Let the mind of humility and lowliness surge through your mind. Take all you are and have and get down where the needs really are. Do all you can to solve the divisiveness and cliques, grumbling and murmuring, selfish ambition and pride, desire for position and power, greed and selfishness, hurt and pain—both in the church and in the world. Humble yourself and do all you can to solve the awful problems that afflict the church and the world. Humble yourself as Christ did and become part of the solution instead of the problem. Look at the mind of Christ. Lay hold of it as it is descriptively pictured in the notes that follow. Do not miss out on the opportunity of an eternity—the glorious privilege of possessing the very mind of Christ Himself.

## **2. (Philippians 2:6) Jesus Christ, Deity: Christ is of the very nature of God.**

**This is critical to note, for it means.....**

- a) that Jesus Christ was not *like* God; He is God.
- b) that Jesus Christ did not just *achieve a high level of righteousness* when on earth, He was the very embodiment of righteousness.
- c) that Jesus Christ did not just *walk more perfectly* than other men walk, He was the very *picture (essence) of perfection*.
- d) that Jesus Christ did not become God when on earth, He has been God throughout all eternity.

**Three points in this verse clearly show that Jesus Christ is God.** Jesus Christ is of the very nature of God.

**1. Jesus Christ is of the "being" of God.** The word "being" (*huparchōn*) means existence, what a person is within and without. It is the very essence of a person, what a person is; that part of a person that cannot be changed. It is who a person is and all that he is.

This is a most glorious truth because it means that ***Jesus Christ is God***; He is the very ***being of God***.

**"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" ([John 1:1](#)).**

**2. Jesus Christ is *in the form of God*.** The word "form" (*morphē*) means the permanent, constant being of a person. It is the very essence of a person, that part of him that never changes. It is the unchangeable being. Barclay points out that there is another Greek word translated "form" (*schema*). In contrast, it means the fleeting, outward form of a person that is always changing. For example, a man is always changing (*schema*) in looks because of age and fashion. But his manhood (*morphē*) never changes. (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.44.)

This means a most glorious thing. Jesus is of the very essence and being and image of God. He is the divine, unchangeable God Himself. He dwells in the very perfection and essence of God; He possesses the very attributes of God Himself.

**"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" ([Hebrews 1:3](#)).**

**"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" ([Col. 1:15](#)).**

**3. Jesus Christ is "equal with God" (Greek).** The word "equal" (*to einai isa*) means to be *on an equal basis with God*; to possess all the qualities and attributes of God Himself. Note also the word "robbery" (*arpagmon*). It is the picture of a thief seeking to snatch or take something that is not his.

**When Jesus Christ was on earth, He was constantly claiming.....**

- a) to be God.
- b) to be the Son of God.
- c) to have the nature of God.
- d) to be one with God.
- e) to be *on an equal basis with God*.

Was He a thief? Was He robbing and snatching the title of God or was He truly God?

The answer is a most glorious truth. Jesus Christ did not have to rob or snatch at equality with God. He did not have to rob and grasp after the deity of God; He was already on an equal basis with God.

**"I and my Father are one" ([John 10:30](#)).**

**"Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" ([John 10:32-33](#)).**

**"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" ([John 8:58](#)).**

### **3. (Philippians 2:7) Jesus Christ, Humiliation; Condescension: Christ emptied Himself and became a man.**

Remember that we are dealing with the subject of humility—the fact that Jesus Christ took one great step down from heaven to earth. The step down was so great and so far that theologians do not call it *the humility of Christ, but the humiliation of Christ*.

The Sovereign Lord of the universe—**He who existed**.....

1. in eternity and perfection
2. in glory and majesty
3. in dominion and power

.....**stepped down and became a man.**

**But more than this:** He who was the Lord and Master of the universe—who deserved all the honor and service of all living creatures—took upon Himself the form of a servant. He became the Servant of men—not only of God, but the *servant of men*. **Imagine!**

1. The Lord whom we are to **serve**, came and **served us**.
2. The Lord whom we are to **love**, came and **loved us**.
3. The Lord whom we are to **adore**, came and **adored us**.
4. The Lord whom we are to **wait upon**, came and **waited upon us**.
5. The Lord whom we are to **minister** to, came and **ministered to us**.
6. The Lord whom we are **to seek**, came and **sought us**.

**The great distance between the majesty of Christ in heaven and the humiliation of Christ upon earth can never be measured.** Our understanding of the distance would amount to no more than a small bucket of water compared to the great ocean. But we are commanded to let the *same mind of humility* flow through us; therefore, we must study the deep humility of Jesus Christ and do our best to grasp and practice it.

**Two statements** in this verse need diligent study.

**1. Jesus Christ made Himself of no reputation; that is, He emptied Himself.** The word "emptied" (*ekenōsen*) means to completely empty. It is the picture of pouring water out of a glass until it is empty or of dumping something until it is all removed (Barclay. *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.44).

The very picture of being completely empty stirs a feeling of just how far Christ went in humbling Himself for us. What was it that was poured or emptied out of Jesus Christ when He left heaven and came to earth? (This is what theologians call the *kenosis theory*.) Note that this passage does not say. It only says that Christ *emptied Himself*. Other Scriptures, however, give some indication.



- a. Christ did not lay aside His deity when He came to earth. He could not cease to be who He was: God. No person can ever cease to be who he is. A person may take on different traits and behave differently; a person may change his behavior and looks, but he is the same person in being, nature, and essence. Jesus Christ is God; therefore, He is always God—He always possesses the nature of God
- b. Christ laid aside some of His rights as God:
  - 1. He laid aside His right *to experience only the glory* and majesty, honor and worship of heaven. In coming to earth as a man, He was to experience anything but glory and majesty, honor and worship. Men would treat Him far differently than a heavenly being.
  - 2. He laid aside His right *to appear only in heaven* and to appear only as the Sovereign God of heaven. In coming to earth as a man, He was, of course, to appear as a man on earth.

**Matthew Henry** has a brief but excellent statement of the fact:

*"He emptied Himself, divested Himself of the honors and glories of the upper world, and of His former appearance, to clothe Himself with the rags of human nature" (Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vol.6, p.732f).*

As stated above, **Jesus Christ emptied Himself of certain rights: the right to appear only in heaven and to experience only the glory of heaven.** This is exactly what Jesus Christ Himself said when He was about to be crucified and return to heaven.

He was praying to the Father when He said:

**"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" ([John 17:5](#)).**

⇒ This is also the point of other Scriptures.

**"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham [the nature of man]. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted ([Hebrews 2:16-18](#)).**

**"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace,**

that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" ([Hebrews 4:14-16](#)).

2. Jesus Christ "**was made in the likeness of men.**" The word "**was made**" (*ginomai*) means to become; a definite entrance into time. It is not a permanent state. Jesus became a man, but it was not to be a permanent state. It was only for a time, a particular period. In the fullness of time He made a definite entrance into the world as a man.

**Thought 1.** Note that Jesus Christ did not come to earth as a prince or some great leader upon earth. He did not come to receive the homage and service of men. He came as the humblest of men, as a servant to serve men. "He was brought up meanly, probably working with his supposed father at his trade. His whole life was a life of humiliation, meanness, poverty, and disgrace; he had nowhere to lay his head, lived upon alms, was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, did not appear with external pomp, or any marks of distinction from other men. This was the humiliation of his life" (Matthew Henry. *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, Vol.6, p.732f).

"For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth" ([Luke 22:27](#)).

"He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded" ([John 13:4-5](#)).

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" ([2 Cor. 8:9](#)).

"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" ([Phil. 2:7](#)).

#### **4. (Philippians 2:8) Jesus Christ, Death; Humiliation; Condescension: Christ humbled Himself to the point of utter humiliation—to the very point of death—"even the death of the cross."**

Note two significant points.

1. **Jesus Christ humbled Himself to the Father.** He was obedient to God the Father. It was the Father's will for Christ to come to earth and to die for the sins of men. And Christ did it; He obeyed God the Father.

"No man taketh it [His life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" ([John 10:18](#)).

**"But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do [go forth and die]. Arise, let us go hence" ([John 14:31](#)).**

**"For as by one man's [Adam's] disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one [Christ] shall many be made righteous" ([Romans 5:19](#)).**

**"Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" ([Hebrews 10:9](#)).**

**2. Jesus Christ humbled Himself to men.** He willingly allowed men to kill Him. He did not have to bear such hostile humiliation and rebellion, but He did.

**Just picture what is involved in the death of the cross.**

- a. Christ humbled Himself to die.
- b. Christ humbled Himself to come out of the spiritual and eternal world (dimension) into the physical and corruptible world in order to die.
- c. Christ humbled Himself to lay aside His eternal glory and majesty and become a man for the purpose of dying.
- d. Christ humbled Himself to suffer rejection, denial, cursing, abuse, arrest, torture, and murder at the hands of rebellious men—whom He had originally created for the joy of eternity—rebellious men whom He had come to save.
- e. Christ humbled Himself to take all the sins of men upon Himself and to bear the weight and suffering of them all.
- f. Christ humbled Himself to bear the judgment and condemnation and punishment of sin for every man.
- g. Christ humbled Himself to suffer the awful experience of having God the Father turn His back upon Him.
- h. Christ humbled Himself to suffer the terrible justice and wrath of God against sin.
- i. Christ humbled Himself to bear the pain of suffering for sin eternally. Christ is eternal; therefore, His death is ever before the face of God. (Just imagine! It is beyond our comprehension, but the Lord's eternal agony is fact because of the eternal nature of God.)

The discussion could go on and on, but the point is well made by Scripture. Jesus Christ not only humbled Himself to become the servant of men, He humbled Himself to suffer the ultimate degree of humiliation:

⇒ ***Jesus Christ became sin for men and died as their sin before the just wrath of God.***

In a sense, hanging there upon the cross Christ was not even a man; He was sin, the very embodiment of sin. In some way He embraced all the sin of the world and died for the sins of men.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" ([2 Cor. 5:21](#)).

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one [all criminals] that hangeth on a tree" ([Galatians 3:13](#)).

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" ([Hebrews 2:9](#)).

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed" ([1 Peter 2:24](#)).

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" ([1 Peter 3:18](#)).

**Thought 1.** Remember the point of this passage: the fact that we must let the humility of Jesus Christ flow in and through us. We are to be humble—to walk in humility before each other—to go to the extreme of humility, even if it means humiliation before each other. Why? So that the church can be unified. Unity is to prevail among us. We are to live and breathe unity.

**There is to be no discord in God's church:**

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. no divisiveness      | g. no personal ambition  |
| b. no grumbling         | h. no self-seeking       |
| c. no murmuring         | i. no prejudice          |
| d. no negative truth    | j. no air of superiority |
| e. no downing of others | k. no criticism          |
| f. no jealousy          |                          |

But note: the only way we can ever know such unity is to let the mind of Christ captivate our mind. We must study, think, and learn the humility of Christ. We must let His humility flow in and through us.

**"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 2:3-5](#)).**

## **5. ([Philippians 2:9-11](#)) Jesus Christ, Exaltation: Christ was rewarded—God highly exalted Him.**

Christ had humbled Himself in obedience to God the Father, and because He was faithful in being humble, God rewarded Him by exalting Him ever so highly. The point is well made: God will reward and exalt any believer who will walk as Christ walked—humbly before Him and men.

**Note how highly God has rewarded and exalted Christ.**

**1. God has highly honored Christ.** God has given Christ a name above every name. Right now, the name of Jesus Christ is cursed all over the world. In fact, at every passing tick of the clock, the name of Jesus Christ is being cursed thousands of times by hordes of people all over the world. But note: not everyone curses His name. Some of us love His name.

**To us His name is the most glorious name ever uttered by human voice, for His name is.....**

a. the name that forgives our sins.

**"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations" ([Luke 24:47](#)).**

b. the name that gives us access into God's presence.

**"And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" ([John 16:23-24](#)).**

**2. God has given Christ supreme power and authority.** God has destined every knee to bow before Christ—the knees of everything in heaven and earth and under the earth. Nothing shall be exempt. The day is coming when every creature in *all the worlds and dimensions of being* shall bow their knees in subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ.

**"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church" ([Ephes. 1:22](#)).**

**"Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" ([1 Peter 3:22](#)).**

**"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" ([Isaiah 45:22-23](#)).**

**3. God has given Christ supreme worship.** God is going to see to it that every creature confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father:

- a. every nation, tongue, and language
- b. every person, mind, and body
- c. every race, color, and shape
- d. every belief, creed, and religion
- e. every man, woman, and child
- f. every king, leader, and authority
- g. every professional worker and laborer

Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is exactly who He claimed to be: the Son of the living God. Every creature is going to worship Him as Lord, the Lord God of the universe.

**"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God" ([Romans 14:11](#)).**

**"Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" ([Rev. 5:12](#)).**

**"Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest" ([Rev. 15:4](#)).**

**Thought 1.** The point is clear: God will exalt the man who humbles himself and works for the unity of the church.

**"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" ([Matthew 18:4](#)).**

**"But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee" ([Luke 14:10](#)).**

**"But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" ([Luke 22:26](#)).**

**"But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" ([James 4:6](#)).**

**"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" ([1 Peter 5:5-6](#)).**

**"A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit" ([Proverbs 29:23](#)).**

**"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" ([Isaiah 57:15](#)).**

**"For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" ([Isaiah 66:2](#)).**

**"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" ([Micah 6:8](#)).**

# THE STEPS TO UNITY, Philippians 2:1-18

## C. Working Out One's Own Salvation or Deliverance, Philippians 2:12-18

**(Philippians 2:12-18) Introduction:** this passage is still dealing with unity—unity in the church and unity among believers. But the passage is unique because it brings up the great subject of salvation. Keep in mind that salvation means deliverance and that salvation is of God. It is God who has saved and delivered you: **"For by grace are ye saved" (Ephes. 2:8-9).**

But once you are saved, go to work—work out your own salvation and deliverance. Salvation is not stagnant and complacent. A saved person is not to be sitting around doing nothing and letting the chips fall where they may. A saved person is to get up and go to work. He is to do all he can to work out his own deliverance. This is the subject of the present passage. If the church is to be unified—if believers are to walk in a spirit of unity, then they must look at their salvation—at the whole scope of their life and the glorious salvation God has given them—and they must do all they can to work out their own deliverance.

1. **The first work: to work out one's own salvation (deliverance) with fear and trembling (v.12).**
2. **The second work: to work at obedience—to work out the stirrings of God within the heart (v.13).**
3. **The third work: to work at not murmuring (v.14).**
4. **The fourth work: to work at being pure (v.15).**
5. **The fifth work: to work at witnessing (v.16).**
6. **The sixth work: to follow the example of sacrificial labor (v.17-18).**

### 1. (Philippians 2:12) Salvation— Deliverance: believers are to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

Remember Paul is in prison being held on false charges. There is a good chance he will be executed. He is not sure he will ever see and share with the Philippians again. Therefore, what he is now writing is carefully chosen. So far as he knows, these words could be his last words to the Philippian church. This is the reason we need to pay close attention to the instructions.

**What does it mean to work out your own salvation?** The word "work out" (*katargazesthe*) means **"to work on to the finish, to completion, to perfection"**. It always means to complete the effort and the work begun; to accomplish it perfectly; to bring it to completion. The point is: do not go half-way in salvation. Do not take bits and pieces when there is a whole parcel. Do not be satisfied with a little when you can have much. Go on, grow until salvation is completed in you. It is your own salvation. No friend, no pastor can work it out for you. You alone must do it.

**The point is clearly stated:** once God has saved a person, that person is to get busy obeying God. He is to take hold of the new life and salvation God has given him, and he is to work on it until it is completed and finished, that is, until God takes him home and perfects it.

**Note that the Philippians are an excellent example.** Paul says that they had always obeyed God, not only when he was with them, but also when he was away. Now, as he was facing death, he wanted them more than ever to work out their salvation—to continue obeying God until their salvation was completed and perfected.

**Note also the words "fear and trembling."** Life is not a bed of roses. It is full of trial, pain, hurt, tragedy, disease, accident, loss, temptation, sin, evil, corruption, and death. Every human being experiences such things until he comes face to face with death. Life is sometimes beautiful and wonderful, but reality is what has just been listed: life is a journey of trials until the point of death. And no amount of denial or camouflage can hide or escape the fact. The only thing that can bring abundance of life is **the absolute confidence** that we shall live eternally in a perfect world.

**What is the point of mentioning all this? The point is forceful: we are expected to work out our own salvation and to do it with fear and trembling.**

- a. We are to fear and tremble because of the trials and temptations of life. Anyone of them can throw us or cause us to buckle under. The world and its temptations and trials are strong and the flesh is weak. We can slip into sin and failure before we know it unless we are constantly working out our deliverance—fearing and trembling lest we fail.
- b. We are to fear and tremble lest we disappoint the Lord. He has saved us, and He has gone to the ultimate limit in order to do it. He has demonstrated a perfect love for us by taking all our sins upon Himself and bearing our punishment for us. Therefore, when we sin and fail, it cuts His heart to no end. For His sake—to keep from hurting Him—we must work out our salvation, fearing and trembling lest we do cut His heart.
- c. We are to fear and tremble because we are to face the judgment seat of Christ. If we sin, we shall be judged and judged severely. Though we may try to reason away the fact, our thoughts about the judgment of God do not affect God's judgment one iota. Every one of us who sins and fails to work out his own salvation shall be judged and suffer loss—great loss. Scripture teaches nothing else. For this reason, the reason of judgment, we must work out our salvation—work it out with fear and trembling.

**"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" ([Matthew 10:28](#)).**



"But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" ([Acts 10:35](#)).

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" ([Titus 2:11-12](#)).

"And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" ([1 Peter 1:17](#)).

"And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" ([Deut. 10:12](#)).

"Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!" ([Psalm 31:19](#)).

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" ([Eccles. 12:13](#)).

"Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread" ([Isaiah 8:13](#)).

## 2. ([Philippians 2:13](#)) Salvation—Obedience: the second work of salvation is to obey.

Believers are to work out their salvation by *working at obedience*—by obeying the stirrings of God within their hearts.

"It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" ([Phil. 2:13](#)).

The word "worketh" (*energōn*) means "to energize". God arouses, stirs, and energizes the heart of the believer to do God's will. This is a most wonderful truth. Just think about it: we all experience movements and stirrings within our heart toward God. These stirrings are of God. God is working within us—energizing us—giving us both *the will and power* to do what pleases Him.

As stated, this is a most wonderful truth. Our duty is to grab hold of the stirrings—not to let them pass. We are to grab hold of them and do exactly what the *stirrings* are arousing and energizing us to do.

**Thought 1.** This is a most wonderful truth. It means that God does not leave us alone to work out our salvation and deliverance. He works within us: moves, stirs, energizes, and arouses us to get up and get to it. And whatever the energy points toward is what we need to do. God uses the energy and stirring to direct and guide

us. The point to see is that God is forever working within us—never leaving us alone—working and stirring us to complete our salvation.

**Thought 2.** The tragedy is this: ignoring, neglecting, and refusing to respond to the stirrings and workings of God. When we feel the stirrings, we desperately need to respond and do whatever God is stirring us to do. Just think how often the stirrings are rejected, ignored, or neglected. How often we continue to sit or go about our own affairs instead of heeding the working and stirring of God. How complacent and lethargic we are. Just think how much growth we lose and how often we must cut the heart of God to the core—all because we choose the things, possessions, and activities of this world instead of Him and His stirrings.

**"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth [makes alive] whom he will" ([John 5:21](#)).**

**"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" ([John 6:63](#)).**

**"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring [stir] all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" ([John 14:26](#)).**

**"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove [convict and stir] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" ([John 16:7-8](#)).**

**"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" ([Romans 12:1-2](#)).**

**"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know [be stirred to know] the things that are freely given to us of God" ([1 Cor. 2:12](#)).**

**"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" ([Ephes. 2:1](#)).**

**"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" ([Col. 3:1](#)).**

**"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you ye shall abide in him" ([1 John 2:27](#)).**

### 3. (Philippians 2:14) Murmuring— Division: believers are to work out their salvation by working at not murmuring and disputing or arguing.

The word "murmuring" (*goggusmōn*) means "to mutter, murmur, grumble, and complain". **Note:** it means the quiet, soft, behind-the-back, undertone of murmuring and grumbling. It is the kind of criticism, dissatisfaction, fault-finding and gossip that goes on within small groups or cliques.

The word "disputings" (*dialogismōn*) means "arguments, outward and vocal questionings, and expressions of doubt". Simply stated, it is just as Scripture says: disputes or arguments that have broken out into the open.

**Note several significant facts.**

1. Murmurings and disputes are not to be allowed in the church. As the verse says: *all things* are to be done without murmurings and disputings. If murmuring begins among a clique or even between two people, the spiritual leaders of the church are to deal with it just as Christ laid out in ([Matthew 18:15-20](#)). It is not to be allowed to fester. Murmurings, unless they are stopped, will lead to disputes, turmoil, and divisiveness.

2. Murmuring and disputes are *never of God—never!* This is the very point of this charge. *All things*—nothing is left out—are to be done without murmuring and disputes.

3. Murmuring and disputes were the very sins that brought judgment upon so many Jews in the wilderness wanderings of Israel.

**"Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer" ([1 Cor. 10:10](#); cp. [Numbers 20:2f](#); [Numbers 21:4](#)).**

4. The person who murmurs and disputes is not working at his salvation or deliverance. He is doing the very opposite: working to bring judgment upon himself.

**Thought 1.** The results of murmuring are far worse than people ever think. This is the primary reason God forbids murmuring and disputes in no uncertain terms.

**Murmuring.....**

1. hurts
2. damages
3. divides
4. tears down
5. downs a person
6. says "look at me"
7. elevates selfish opinion
8. opposes God's will
9. hinders progress

10. stymies growth
11. misleads people
12. is self-centered
13. pushes people away from Christ and the church

**"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (1 Cor. 3:3).**

**"For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults" (2 Cor. 12:20).**

**"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:3-4).**

**"Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers" (2 Tim. 2:14).**

**"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (2 Tim. 2:24).**

**"Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbor hath put thee to shame" (Proverbs 25:8).**

#### **4. (Philippians 2:15) Purity: believers are to work out their salvation by working at being pure.**

1. Believers are to work at being **"blameless" (amemptoi)**: free from fault and censure; to be faultless; above reproach and rebuke. The believer is to live a blameless, faultless and pure life, both in the church and in the world. No one is to be able to point to the Christian and accuse or blame him with anything. The Christian is to be clean, unpolluted, spotless, holy, righteous, and pure before man and God.

2. Believers are to work at being **"harmless" (akeraioi)**: unmixed and unadulterated. It is the idea of flour or grain passing through a sieve to separate the pure from the impure.

**It means that our thoughts and lives.....**

- a) are not to be polluted by watching, reading, and listening to worldly and sexual attractions.
- b) are not to be given over to worldly and sexual attractions.

Our thoughts and lives are to be pure, clean, uncontaminated, and unpolluted.

**"I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple [harmless] concerning evil" ([Romans 16:19](#)).**

**"That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ" ([Phil. 1:10](#)).**

**"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" ([Phil. 2:15](#)).**

**"For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" ([Hebrews 7:26](#)).**

**"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" ([2 Tim. 4:18](#)).**

**"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" ([Jude 24](#)).**

3. Believers are to work at being **"without rebuke" (*amōma*)**: without blemish, spot, or defect. This is a word that is taken from the Old Testament sacrifices made to God. The idea is that the believer is to live and walk upon earth under the eyes and scrutiny of God. He is to walk without any blemish, spot, or defect.

However, note a fact: the believer lives in a crooked and perverse generation. The world is wicked and evil, twisted and perverted; therefore, the believer has a difficult path to walk. But walk he must, for he is to be the light of the world. He is to shine as a light in the world. He is to reflect the purity and holiness of God Himself.

**"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" ([Matthew 5:14](#)).**

**"For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth" ([Acts 13:47](#)).**

**"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" ([Ephes. 5:8](#)).**

**"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" ([Phil. 2:15](#)).**

**"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live**

together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do" ([1 Thes. 5:5-11](#)).

## 5. ([Philippians 2:16](#)) **Witnessing: believers are to work out their salvation by working at witnessing.**

The wording is descriptive: "**Holding forth the word of life.**" Imagine! There is a *Word of life*. Men can live, truly live—both now and forever. Men never have to die.

1. It is like saying the fountain of youth has been discovered with one difference: the Word of life not only brings eternal youth, it brings perfection—a perfect world and a perfect life.
2. It is like saying the cure for cancer has been discovered with one difference: the Word of life not only cures the cancer, it injects the energy of everlasting life into the other cells of the body.

But note the terrible tragedy! So many of us do not hold forth the Word of life. We hold back. We do not share the message of the glorious gospel of life. The Word of life is just what it says: it is the message of life that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" ([John 10:10](#)).**

**"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" ([John 10:28](#)).**

**"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" ([John 3:16-17](#)).**

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" ([John 5:24](#)).**

**"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed" ([John 6:27](#)).**

**"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" ([Romans 6:22](#)).**

**"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" ([2 Tim. 1:10](#)).**

**"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" ([Titus 1:2](#)).**

**"And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life" ([1 John 2:25](#)).**

**"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" ([Jude 21](#)).**

**Thought 1.** The one thing we must work at is holding forth the Word of life. The Word of life is the only hope for a world that reels under the weight of so many desperate needs, especially the desperate need to handle sin and evil and the terrible destiny of death.

**"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)).**

**"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" ([Mark 16:15](#)).**

**"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" ([Acts 1:8](#)).**

**"We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak" ([2 Cor. 4:13](#)).**

**"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" ([2 Tim. 1:8](#)).**

**"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" ([1 Peter 3:15](#)).**

**"Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name" ([Malachi 3:16](#)).**

## **6. ([Philippians 2:17-18](#)) Sacrifice— Labor: believers are to work out their salvation by following the example of sacrificial labor.**

Very simply stated, Paul had offered himself as a sacrifice to serve men. The picture is that of the sacrifice and offerings made by people to the heathen gods. Paul had taken his body and offered it as a sacrifice and service for people. He lived for nothing else except to hold forth the Word of life to people. His body was totally sacrificed for that purpose and that purpose alone.

**"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" ([Luke 9:23](#)).**

**"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" ([Romans 12:1-2](#)).**

**"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" ([1 Cor. 6:20](#)).**



# THE EXAMPLES OF SOME CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS, [Philippians 2:19-30](#)

## A. The Example of Timothy—a Young Man Who Willingly Served in Second Place, [Philippians 2:19-24](#)

[\(Philippians 2:19-24\)](#) **Introduction:** nothing challenges the human heart any more than the faithful example of others. This passage gives us the dynamic example of a man who was totally committed to Jesus Christ: Timothy. Timothy was a young man who willingly served in second place.

1. [Timothy—a young man who willingly served in second place \(v.19\).](#)
2. [He had a kindred, brotherly spirit in caring for others \(v.20\).](#)
3. [He was willing to deny himself—to be obsessed with the things of Christ \(v.21\).](#)
4. [He was willing to be a son, a disciple \(v.22-24\).](#)

### 1. [\(Philippians 2:19\) Timothy— Ministers, Associates— Assistants:](#) there is the example of Timothy, a young man who willingly served in second place.

The scene is this. Paul is deeply concerned about the Philippian church and its believers. He loves them deeply and he longs to minister among them. **Note that his pastoral heart reaches out to them:**

**He mentions their state (condition, welfare) twice:**

- a. He wants to know their state or condition ([Phil. 2:19](#)).
- b. He wants to care for them, for their state or welfare ([Phil. 2:20](#)).

But he is in prison; he cannot personally visit the church. What can he do? He does the next best thing. He plans to send his faithful companion and co-worker, Timothy, just as soon as he can.

**The point to note** is the pastoral heart of both Paul and Timothy, especially Timothy, for he is the subject of these verses. Timothy was a man who was called to serve in second place. However, of all the persons covered in Scripture, Timothy was as faithful to the Lord as any. He willingly and sacrificially served in second place.

**Thought 1.** Serving in second place is a privilege. The second man not only leads those under his responsibility, but he also contributes to the life and ministry of the first man.

## 2. (Philippians 2:20) Timothy— Care— Church: Timothy had a kindred, brotherly spirit in caring for others.

In fact, he was unequalled. There were many excellent ministers of the gospel, but Timothy's spirit came closest to Paul's than all the others. Timothy cared for the churches and their believers just as Paul cared. His heart *naturally cared* (*gnēsiōs*). His care arose from deep within: it was genuine and sincere—the same kind of care that a genuine brother would have. Timothy's ministry—his care and concern for the believers—would be deep and genuine, a true concern.

**"And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jeremiah 3:15).**

**"And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 23:4).**

**"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (1 Peter 5:2).**

## 3. (Philippians 2:21) Self-denial— Selfishness— Covetousness: Timothy was willing to deny himself—to be obsessed with the things of Christ.

In no uncertain terms, Paul says:

**"All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. 2:21).**

**What a sweeping indictment of believers and in particular ministers.**

**Note what several commentators have to say about the issue:**

**Matthew Henry asks:** *"Did Paul say this in haste, as David said, All men are liars? (Psalm 116:11). Was there so general a corruption among ministers so early that there was not one among them who cared for the state of their people? We must not understand it so: he means the generality; all, that is, either the most, or all in comparison of Timothy. Note, seeking our own interest to the neglect of Jesus Christ is a very great sin, and very common among Christians and ministers. Many prefer their own credit, ease, and safety, before truth, holiness, and duty, the things of their own pleasure and reputation before the things of Christ's kingdom and his honour and interest in the world: but Timothy was none of these"* (*Matthew Henry's Commentary*, Vol.5, p.736).

**Ralph P. Martin asks:** *"Does this verse represent the apostle's bitter complaint that, when he sought a fellow-believer to go to Philippi, there was none forthcoming because they were 'wrapped up in their own affairs' and did 'not really care for the business of Jesus Christ' [J.B. Philipps]. ...he remembers that, in a world of selfishness and self-seeking (Matthew 6:32), it is such a rare thing to find a man like Timothy who is really anxious to promote the welfare of other*

people, and to give himself to a fatiguing journey and to the resolving of personal quarrels in the Philippian church. This would be a delicate issue to handle, calling for tact, wisdom and patience" (*The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*. "Tyndale Bible Commentaries," ed. by RVG Tasker. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959, p.124f).

*Lehman Strauss states: "This pathetic condition of self-seeking is the curse of Christendom in general and of the ministry in particular. Paul's words are a scathing indictment against the awful sin of selfishness. It must have been present in the early Church, for we remember his exhortation at the beginning of our chapter: 'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others' [Phil. 2:4].*

*"There are so few who devote their lives in selfless service. We are more concerned with our interests, our goods, our getting ahead, than we are with the needs of others. Genuine Christian love 'seeketh not her own' [1 Cor. 13:5]. 'Let no man, then, set his own advantage as his objective, but rather the good of his neighbor' [1 Cor. 10:24, Phillips].*

*"In spite of these holy admonitions, self-seeking and self-glorifying gain momentum with the passing of time. Few are seeking to follow closely in the steps of Christ and of Christlike men such as Paul. Most of us seek our own interests while we profess Christ's Name. One wonders if the claims of Christ ever enter the calculations of some Christians. The late William Lincoln of Beresford, London, said: 'Rest assured, that if you put Christ in the second place, and your own things in the first, you will hear of it at the Judgment Seat.' " (*Devotional Studies in Philippians*, p.133.)*

**The point is well made:** Timothy did not seek his own things. He denied himself. He had not fallen into the trap of so many. His primary concern was for the mission and truth of Christ and the welfare of the church. But this was not true with most of the believers and ministers in Rome, and tragically, it has not been true with many believers and ministers down through the centuries.

**Many have sought their own things first; many have made the things of Christ second in order to protect their.....**

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| a. livelihood | h. recognition |
| b. comfort    | i. position    |
| c. acceptance | j. authority   |
| d. security   | k. friendship  |
| e. following  | l. possessions |

**"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" ([Matthew 19:21](#)).**

**"I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not" ([Matthew 25:43](#)).**

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" ([Luke 9:23-24](#)).

"And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" ([Luke 12:15](#)).

"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" ([Luke 14:27](#)).

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" ([Romans 8:13](#)).

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" ([Romans 14:21](#)).

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" ([Romans 15:1](#)).

"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" ([1 Cor. 10:24](#)).

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" ([Galatians 5:24](#)).

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" ([Phil. 3:8](#)).

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" ([Col. 3:5](#)).

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's" ([Exodus 20:17](#)).

"For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness: and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely" ([Jeremiah 6:13](#)).

"And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness" ([Ezekiel 33:31](#)).

#### **4. ([Philippians 2:22-24](#)) Discipleship: Timothy was willing to be a son, a disciple tried and proven.**

There was a close bond between Paul and Timothy. Timothy was as a son to Paul, and note: Timothy looked upon Paul as a father to him. Paul could never have said this if Timothy thought and acted otherwise.

Paul enlisted Timothy as one of his disciples and missionary partners on his second missionary journey (see [Acts 16:1-3](#)). From that time forth, Timothy became a dynamic minister of the Lord—a minister who was called to serve in second place. Barclay gives an excellent summary of the verses that connect Timothy to Paul (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.59).

**1. Timothy was a close companion of Paul.**

- a. Paul called Timothy his son in the faith ([1 Cor. 4:17](#)).
- b. Timothy was with Paul...
  1. in Philippi ([Acts 16:1f](#)).
  2. in Thessalonica and Berea ([Acts 17:1-14](#)).
  3. in Corinth ([Acts 18:1-5](#)).
  4. in Ephesus ([Acts 19:21-22](#)).
  5. in prison in Rome ([Col. 1:1](#); [Phil. 1:1](#)).

**2. Timothy was involved in one way or another with seven of the writings of Paul.**

1. **1 and 2 Thessalonians**
2. **Romans** (he sends greetings to the church)
3. **Colossians** and **Philippians**
4. **1 and 2 Timothy**
5. **2 Corinthians**

**3. Timothy was closely connected to Paul in ministering to the churches.**

**Timothy was sent by Paul to minister.....**

1. in Thessalonica ([1 Thes. 3:6](#)).
2. in Corinth ([1 Cor. 4:17](#); [1 Cor. 16:10-11](#)).
3. in Philippi ([Phil. 2:19](#)).

**Thought 1.** The point to see is how closely bound together Paul and Timothy were and how faithful Timothy was. He was a tried and proven minister, a minister willing to serve in the place the Lord had put him—the position of serving in second place.

**"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" ([1 Cor. 4:1](#)).**

**"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" ([1 Cor. 15:58](#)).**

**"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" ([2 Tim. 2:3-4](#)).**

**"The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity" ([Malachi 2:6](#)).**

# THE EXAMPLES OF SOME CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS, [Philippians 2:19-30](#)

## B. The Example of Epaphroditus—a Man Who Was Not a Quitter Nor a Coward, [Philippians 2:25-30](#)

**([Philippians 2:25-30](#)) Introduction— Epaphroditus— Minister:** Barclay points to a dramatic story behind Epaphroditus. The Philippian church had heard that Paul was in prison, and that he was having an extremely difficult time. Their hearts went out to him, so they decided to do two things: to take up an offering to meet Paul's material needs and to send a dedicated layman who could remain with him and help him. Such a man would have to be savagely brave, for by attaching himself to a man facing a capital crime, he would be leaving himself open to the charge of being an accomplice. By helping Paul the man would be risking his own life. The man chosen was Epaphroditus.

While in Rome, Epaphroditus fell seriously ill and came close to death. News of his illness reached Philippi. And in turn, news returned to Epaphroditus that his home church was worried over his welfare. He in turn began to worry over them. But God spared him, and after gaining his strength, Paul felt for some reason (perhaps to keep this illness from recurring or to eliminate the possibility of his being arrested) that Epaphroditus should return to Philippi.

But the possibility of a problem existed. If he returned before Paul's fate was known, some would call him a quitter, a coward, a failure. (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.60f.) The answer to this criticism is the very reason for this passage. Paul gives a glowing appraisal of their messenger.

1. **He did not quit nor forsake his brother (v.25).**
2. **He did not quit nor forsake the church (v.26).**
3. **He did not quit nor forsake God (v.27).**
4. **Conclusion: the appeal (v.28-30).**

### 1. ([Philippians 2:25](#)) **Servant— Ministering: Epaphroditus did not quit nor forsake his Christian brother.**

He had been sent to Rome to minister to Paul who was in prison. Epaphroditus became critically ill and almost died. He could have easily returned to Philippi after he recovered, but he did not. He stuck to his call and mission, and he completed it. Epaphroditus was so staunch a believer that Paul gives him five titles.

1. **He was a *Christian brother*. Note the tenderness:** Paul called him "my brother." A brother is a person who has the same parent. Epaphroditus was born of God. He had placed his faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and God had honored his faith by giving him a new birth—a spiritual birth. God had made a *new creature* or *new man* out

of him ([2 Cor. 5:17](#); [Ephes. 4:24](#); [Col. 3:10](#)). Therefore, he was a brother to Paul and a member of God's family.

**"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" ([John 1:12](#)).**

**"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" ([2 Cor. 6:17-18](#)).**

**"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" ([Ephes. 2:19](#)).**

**2. He was a *companion in the work of the Lord*.** Many persons serve in the work of the Lord, but not everyone is a true companion in labor. A true companion is *by the side* of his friend; he is there with him: understanding, feeling, supporting, consoling, comforting, encouraging, and helping whenever needed.

**There is nothing between true companions.....**

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>a.</b> no distance   | <b>d.</b> no competition |
| <b>b.</b> no envy       | <b>e.</b> no neglect     |
| <b>c.</b> no withdrawal | <b>f.</b> no forsaking   |

As stated, a true companion in the ministry is there by the side of his friend and he is always there. He never forsakes his friend regardless of the circumstances. Epaphroditus was a true example of a companion in labor. Paul was a prisoner about to stand trial for his life, and he had been forsaken by most believers ([2 Tim. 4:16](#)).

**But note Epaphroditus:** he stood by Paul despite the severe circumstances. And remember: he had become deathly ill; but even then, when he had every reason to return home for recuperation, he stayed in Rome by Paul's side. Epaphroditus was a companion indeed. **He was not a quitter! He was not a coward!**

**"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" ([John 15:13-14](#)).**

**"A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" ([Proverbs 18:24](#)).**

**"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up" ([Eccles. 4:9-10](#)).**

**3. He was a *fellowsoldier*.** No doubt this refers to the hardiness and steadfastness of Epaphroditus. By sticking so closely to Paul, he ran the risk of being identified as a

follower of Paul who was being falsely tried as an insurrectionist against the state. This danger was probably the reason so many believers forsook Paul ([2 Tim. 4:16](#)).

But not Epaphroditus; he stood fast—he stood as a fellow soldier with Paul.....

1. despite the danger.
2. despite his own ill health.

Epaphroditus was set on completing his ministry and on helping Paul in his ministry as much as possible—despite the terrible circumstances of imprisonment and illness that drug him to the brink of death. Epaphroditus was a true soldier—willing to risk his life for the sake of the gospel of God's people. He was not a quitter! He was not a coward!

**"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" ([2 Tim. 2:3-4](#)).**

**4. He was a messenger of the church.** The word "messenger" is "apostolos", which is the very word for apostle. The word means "messenger, an ambassador sent on a very special mission". Paul is saying that this dear saint of God had been called as a very special messenger and ambassador for God. He was a very special apostle, a very special messenger of God. He was far from being a quitter! Far from being a coward!

**5. He was a very special minister (*leitourgon*).** Barclay points out that this word would have great meaning to the Greek minds of the Philippian church. The word (*leitourgon*) was a great word and was used only of great men. The title was bestowed only upon great benefactors, men who loved their city, culture, arts, or sports so much that they gave huge sums of money to support these functions. The person was looked upon as a great servant or minister given over to his cause. (*The Letters to the Phillipians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.61.) Paul is here bestowing the great title of minister (*leitourgon*) upon Epaphroditus. Epaphroditus was an extraordinary minister of God who ministered to Paul's needs. He was not a quitter! He was not a coward!

**"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" ([Matthew 20:28](#)).**

**"But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all" ([Mark 10:43-44](#)).**

**"He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded....If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" ([John 13:4-5, 14](#)).**

**"Moreover it is required in stewards [ministers] that a man be found faithful" ([1 Cor. 4:2](#)).**



**"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" ([Galatians 6:2](#)).**

**"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" ([Galatians 6:10](#)).**

**"With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" ([Ephes. 6:7](#)).**

## **2. ([Philippians 2:26](#)) Dedication— Loyalty— Service: Epaphroditus did not quit nor forsake the church.**

The Philippian church had sent Epaphroditus to help and minister to Paul. While there in Rome he had become deathly sick. At that point, Epaphroditus could have forsaken the mission of the church. He could have concluded that the mission was not worth losing his life over and returned home. The threat of being identified as a cohort of Paul would have been understood and accepted by many if not all, and his illness and the need to recuperate from a deathly illness would have definitely been understood by all. Epaphroditus had every human reason to return home and let someone else take up the gauntlet and resume the task.

But as a true soldier of Jesus Christ, he would not, and he did not. In fact, note the glorious testimony of this verse. Epaphroditus was not concerned over his welfare, but over the church's welfare. News of his illness had reached the church back home, and Epaphroditus was *concerned* about his family, friends, and the church worrying over him. What a heart of tenderness, warmth, softness, and of ministry! Just the kind of heart we all need—especially the ministers of the gospel.

**The point to note is this:** Epaphroditus was faithful to his call and to his church. He did not quit nor forsake the church. He had every reason to, but he did not. He stood fast despite the worst kind of circumstances and the threat to his own life.

## **3. ([Philippians 2:27](#)) Dedication: Epaphroditus did not quit nor forsake God.**

It looked like God had forsaken him. It seemed as though God had blessed him ever so richly until he had arrived in Rome.

**God had led the church in Philippi.....**

1. to appoint him as a special messenger for the Lord and for the great Philippian church.
2. to give him the coveted task of joining and ministering to the great evangelist and missionary Paul.

But when he arrived in Rome, he found out that by associating with Paul there was the danger of being judged as an insurrectionist—as a cohort of Paul. He was risking his own life by associating with Paul. And then, to top it off, he had become ill and almost died.

God could have prevented it from happening. Why did He not stop it? A thousand questions flooded Epaphroditus' mind—each one tempting him to question and doubt God. He could have quit and forsaken the mission and not too many people would have questioned his decision. In fact, the vast majority would have agreed, thinking it the course of wisdom. But not Epaphroditus, He was not a quitter! He was not a coward! He was a true minister of God! God had done so much for him—especially in saving him and giving him the assurance of living forever—he could never quit nor forsake God.

#### **4. (Philippians 2:28-30) Dedication— Minister: the conclusion is an appeal by Paul.**

Paul was sending Epaphroditus back to the church. The church was to joy in him and in his steadfast faithfulness. In no sense of the word were they to question him because he was returning. He was returning because Paul was sending him back, not because he was choosing to return.

Note the words "**not regarding his life**" (*paraboleusamenos*). A.T. Robertson points out that this is a gambling word, that it means to gamble one's life; to stake everything; to chance everything; to recklessly gamble. Epaphroditus staked his life for the ministry of Christ. He courageously risked his life. (*Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.4, p.449.*)

**Thought 1.** Epaphroditus both challenges and rebukes a soft, easy going Christianity and ministry. His life shows that Christianity is stern and demanding. It calls for self-denial and self-effacing sacrifice. It gives little thought to personal comfort and safety.

**"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" ([Luke 9:23-24](#)).**

**"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" ([Luke 14:26](#)).**

**"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" ([Romans 8:13](#)).**

**"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" ([Romans 15:1](#)).**

**"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" ([1 Cor. 10:24](#)).**

**"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" ([Galatians 5:24](#)).**

**"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" ([Phil. 3:8](#)).**

# THE "PRESSING ON" OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, Philippians 3:1-21

## A. Pressing On: Guarding Oneself, Philippians 3:1-3

**(Philippians 3:1-3) Introduction:** this chapter is one of the great chapters of the Bible, a chapter that needs to be studied time and again. It includes the great personal testimony and ambition of Paul. It gives us some of the great principles that governed Paul's life. The subject of the chapter is "**The Pressing on of The Christian Believer.**" These are some things the Christian believer must do as he presses on for Christ. First, he must guard himself.

1. **By rejoicing in the Lord (v.1).**
2. **By heeding what is written (the Scripture) (v.1).**
3. **By watching out for false teachers (v.2).**
4. **By knowing that you are the true (spiritual) circumcision (v.3).**

### 1. (Philippians 3:1) Rejoicing: guard yourself by rejoicing in the Lord.

A person who is always rejoicing in the Lord will not go astray. As the believer walks through life, two things are always confronting him: circumstances and false teaching. No matter where he goes, the trials of life, both minor and major, confront him.

**He has to stand face to face with the awful trials of life including.....**

- |                         |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| a. enticing temptations | g. divisions        |
| b. lust of the eyes     | h. inhuman behavior |
| c. lust of the flesh    | i. criminal acts    |
| d. greed                | j. death            |
| e. selfishness          | k. accidents        |
| f. arguments            | l. disease          |

The list could go on and on. No person escapes the trials of life—not if he walks upon this earth. He is confronted with the awful reality of trials every day of his life. Note another fact as well. No matter where he walks, the false teachings of this life confront him. No matter which way the believer turns, he is confronted with different ideas about how to handle life and its great trials.

- a. There is the teaching that says, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. Ignore the trials and problems of life. Life is to be enjoyed by those who have the health and money to enjoy it, so get all the gusto out of life possible. Do your own thing."
- b. There is the teaching that says, "Discipline and control yourself. Take care of your body and mind. Don't give in to the lusts and passions of this life. The abuse of a mind and body is a waste. Live

as long and contribute as much as you can by walking a disciplined and controlled life."

- c. There is the teaching that says, "Don't go overboard. Enjoy life—join in—do what you want; but do it within reason. Don't overly abuse your mind and body. It's all right to join and indulge occasionally; just don't do it too often and hurt yourself."
- d. There is the teaching that says religion is the answer to both life and death, "Join a religious body, undergo its rituals, adopt its beliefs, and live the best you can. This will give you a strong self-image and confidence that God will accept you. Just be as good as you can and God will accept what goodness you are able to build up."

The list of false teachings could go on and on. The point is this: the believer is bombarded by both trials and false teachings every day of his life. He must, therefore, guard himself; and the first guard is to rejoice in the Lord. If he walks throughout the day rejoicing in the Lord, his mind is upon the Lord.

**He rejoices over what Christ has done for him—rejoices over the Lord.....**

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| a. justifying him    | h. securing righteousness for him   |
| b. adopting him      | i. dying for him—bearing his condemnation and judgment                    |
| c. reconciling him   | j. arising for him—giving him a new life                                  |
| d. saving him        | k. giving him the privilege of knowing God                                |
| e. loving him        | l. giving him victory over sin  |
| f. delivering him    | m. guiding and directing him  |
| g. looking after him | n. giving him an eternal hope and the glorious confidence of eternal life |

The believer just walks about joying and rejoicing in all that the Lord has done and is doing for him. This is essential if the believer is to guard himself against the onslaught of trials and false teaching in this life. If the believer is to press on in his Christian life, he must walk about rejoicing in the Lord.

**Now note: the great thing that rejoicing does is this: it places and keeps a person in the presence of Christ.** No matter what confronts the believer—no matter how terrible the trial—he knows that he is being looked after by Christ Jesus his Lord. He knows that nothing can separate him from the Lord and His love—that he shall never die, but rather live eternally. Therefore, he knows that whatever comes upon him can never conquer and overcome him. Christ will give him supernatural power and strength to overcome it.

And if he is called upon to lay down his body and move on to heaven, he knows that he shall never taste or experience death; he knows that Jesus Christ is going to escort him right on into God's presence immediately—quicker than the eye can blink—about 1/100 of a second. The believer is forever secure in the keeping power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, he walks rejoicing in the Lord: he rejoices no matter what confronts him.

**"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" ([Romans 8:35-39](#)).**

**Thought 1.** Rejoicing in the Lord is one of the very best ways to guard oneself against the trials of life and false teaching. When a person rejoices in the Lord, his mind is focused upon the Lord, upon what the Lord has done for him. And the mind cannot be two places at once. If it is upon the Lord and His glorious salvation, then it cannot be upon the trials and false teachings of this world.

**"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" ([Luke 10:20](#)).**

**"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" ([John 15:11](#)).**

**"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" ([Romans 12:15](#)).**

**"As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" ([2 Cor. 6:10](#)).**

**"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice" ([Phil. 4:4](#)).**

**"Rejoice evermore" ([1 Thes. 5:16](#)).**

**"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" ([1 Peter 4:12-13](#)).**

**"And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee" ([Deut. 12:7](#)).**

**"But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee" ([Psalm 5:11](#)).**

**"Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart" ([Psalm 32:11](#)).**

**"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation" ([Habakkuk 3:17-18](#)).**

**"The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel" ([Isaiah 29:19](#)).**

## **2. ([Philippians 3:1](#)) Scriptures: guard yourself by heeding what is written, that is, the Scriptures.**

**Note:** Paul says that he is writing some things that he had apparently written before. What he is about to write is so important that it has to be repeated. The church must do what is being said.

The point is this: the writings of Paul and of Scripture must be heeded. What Scripture says was written to instruct us and to help us in *pressing on* for Christ. No person can press on apart from heeding the Scriptures. If he fails to study and obey the Scripture, he will cave in either to the trials of life or to false teaching. Only as we obey the Scripture—the commandments of the Lord—can we show our love and loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ.

**"If ye love me, keep my commandments" ([John 14:15](#)).**

**"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" ([John 14:21](#)).**

**"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" ([John 14:23](#)).**

**"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" ([John 15:10](#)).**

**"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" ([Acts 17:11](#)).**

**"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" ([Acts 20:32](#)).**

**"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" ([2 Tim. 2:15](#)).**

**"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" ([2 Tim. 3:16](#)).**

**"And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" ([2 Peter 2:2-3](#)).**

### **3. (Philippians 3:2) Teachers, False: guard yourself by watching out for false teachers.**

Paul was always facing false teachers who were savage in their attacks upon him. He mentions three groups of false teachers in this verse.

#### **1. Beware of “false teachers” who act like dogs (*kunas*).**

It should be noted that both Jew and Gentile called each other dogs as a term of contempt. The word "**dogs**" was the lowest title possible to convey contempt and ridicule. Dog does not refer to the house pet of today, but to the wild dogs that roamed in the forests by day and the city streets by night. They were scavengers and snarlers who could be very vicious and dangerous.

#### **The point is descriptive: there are some false teachers who are just like wild dogs.**

⇒ They are scavengers who seek out all whom they can consume with their false teaching. And if any step forward to defend the sheep and the truth, they snarl and often become vicious and dangerous, ready to attack the defender and destroy him.

**"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" ([Matthew 7:6](#)).**

**"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" ([Matthew 7:15](#)).**

**"Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known" ([Matthew 10:26](#)).**

**"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision" ([Phil. 3:2](#)).**

**"While they [false teachers] promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" ([2 Peter 2:19-22](#)).**

**"For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" ([Rev. 22:15](#)).**

**"For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet" ([Psalm 22:16](#)).**

**2. Beware of false teachers who are “evil workers”.**

The world is full of people who work evil things.

1. This refers to those who hold to and teach high standards of righteousness, morality, and religion. They are absolutely sure they are righteous and good—at least good enough to be acceptable to God. There is just no way God would ever reject them—they think.
2. This also refers to those who live and teach evil by the way they live and talk about morality, righteousness and religion. Some live base, immoral, indulgent, and extravagant lives, while others try to mix both a religious and indulgent life-style together.

**The point is this: there are those who are always opposing the Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation by grace alone.** They do not accept that He is God's Son—that He is the Lord of man's life; the Lord who is to be given all we are and have. Therefore, they accept His teaching, but ignore or deny salvation by His blood. They stand opposed to the gospel of salvation by His grace alone. They go about establishing their own way to God, doing whatever good they feel is needed to make themselves acceptable to Him. The result is false teaching—a way to God that stands against the Lord Jesus Christ and His way. Such false teachers are evil workers—workers who stand opposed to the truth.

**3. Beware of false teachers who are of the “concionism”.** The concision refers to the Judaizers (see note, [Judaizers](#)—[Galatians 2:3-5](#); [Deeper Study #1—Galatians 2:4](#) for discussion. It is important to read this note before proceeding with this point.)

**"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" ([Matthew 5:19-20](#)).**

**"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" ([Romans 10:3-5](#)).**

**"Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm" ([1 Tim. 1:7](#)).**

**"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself" ([1 Tim. 6:3-5](#)).**



"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" ([2 Tim. 4:3-4](#)).

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" ([2 Peter 2:1](#)).

#### 4. ([Philippians 3:3](#)) Believers—Circumcision: guard yourself by knowing that you are the true circumcision. (see [Deeper Study #1, Circumcision—Phil. 3:3](#) for discussion).

Note that believers are called *the circumcision*. What does Paul mean?

**1. Believers are those who worship God as He really wishes to be worshipped:** in the spirit; that is, they have circumcised or cut away the flesh as the means by which they worship God. **Think for a moment: How do most people attempt to worship God?**

- a. By attending church services
- b. By praying
- c. By making occasional gifts to needy causes
- d. By thinking of God occasionally
- e. By being circumcised or baptized or undergoing some other ritual
- f. By keeping the rituals and ceremonies of a church
- g. By joining a church
- h. By observing special days

**But note a critical point: as good as all of these are, they are not the basis of true worship.** They are things that we do *because* we worship; they are the result and activities of worship. They are not the basis or spirit of worship. True, they may help us to focus upon God and stir us to worship Him, but as stated, they are not the basis and spirit of worship.

⇒ **The basis of worship is the Spirit of God, and the spirit of worship is the Spirit of God.**

To worship God, man must have the Spirit of God living within his body and spirit. He no longer worships God externally through rituals and ceremonies. He now worships God inwardly through the Spirit of God who lives within him. True worship is no longer through anything that is of the physical or material world, no longer of anything that is of man's flesh. True worship is of the spirit.

**Thought 1.** True worship has to be of the heart and spirit. Why? Because a man can attend church, keep all the rituals and ceremonies, and still be living in the depths of sin. But if a man's spirit is right with God, he worships God with a clean and pure heart, free from all sin and defilement. The truly circumcised person is the person who worships God in spirit.

**"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" ([John 4:24](#)).**

**"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" ([1 Cor. 6:19-20](#)).**

**2. Believers are those who rejoice as God really wants us to rejoice:** in Christ Jesus. **Christ Jesus.....**

- a. is God's only begotten Son.
- b. is the Person who gave Himself to die for us, bearing our sins and condemnation.
- c. is the Person who has saved us, made it possible for us to live forever in the presence of God.
- d. is the only Savior, the only acceptable way to enter God's presence.

Therefore, it is only natural that God expects us to rejoice in Christ Jesus. How could we boast and rejoice in ritual and ceremony and religion? The Source—the Author and Finisher—of our faith is Christ Jesus. Therefore, the true circumcision, the true believer does not boast in anything physical or material—not in ritual or ceremony or religion. The true circumcision rejoices and boasts in Him who has given us salvation and access to God, even in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" ([John 15:11](#)).**

**"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice" ([Phil. 4:4](#)).**

**"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" ([1 Peter 1:8](#)).**

**"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels" ([Isaiah 61:10](#)).**

**"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts" ([Jeremiah 15:16](#)).**

### 3. Believers are those who have no confidence in the flesh.

#### The flesh.....

1. is only physical and material.
2. can only handle physical and material things.
3. can only do good works and keep external rituals and ceremonies and religious practices.
4. can do nothing beyond the physical and material.
5. cannot penetrate the spiritual world or dimension of being.

The flesh ages, deteriorates, and corrupts. Therefore, the flesh goes the way of all material and physical substances: it dies and decays. And no matter what the flesh has done and accomplished in this physical world, it takes all its works to the grave with it. The flesh dies and all that concerns the flesh dies with it. Therefore, the true circumcision, the true believer, has no confidence and puts no stock in the flesh. He has confidence only in Jesus Christ.

**"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" ([Romans 7:18](#)).**

**"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" ([Romans 7:25](#)).**

**"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" ([Romans 8:8](#)).**

**"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" ([Romans 8:13](#)).**

**"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" ([Galatians 5:17](#)).**

**"For he that soweth to this flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" ([Galatians 6:8](#)).**

**"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" ([1 John 2:15-16](#)).**

# THE "PRESSING ON" OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, [Philippians 3:1-21](#)

## B. Pressing On: Paul's Personal Testimony—Rejecting Self-Righteousness and Seeking Perfection, [Philippians 3:4-16](#)

**(Philippians 3:4-16) Introduction:** all across the world men sense they need a relationship with God. They have a sense of God, but they sense there is something wrong between them and God. Sometimes they feel things are right; other times as though things are wrong. But underlying whatever feelings they have, men are never sure whether or not things are right with God. They lack perfect assurance and confidence that they please God enough to be acceptable to Him. They have a hope that God will accept them, but they do not know, not with absolute certainty.

It is these feelings that have stirred the religions of the world. Men want to be right with God; they want to be approved and accepted by God. They want God to look after them and help them, and they want God to accept them when this life is over. Therefore, they set out to do what they feel will make them *good enough* to be acceptable to God. They try to do whatever good they feel is necessary to please *their god*. Granted, the degree to which men feel this differs among all men. One man will feel that he has to be extremely good, whereas another man feels that he has to be moderately good.

**The point to note is this: *this kind of religion is a religion*.....**

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| a. of works                            | e. of being good                     |
| b. of doing good                       | f. of preparing oneself for God      |
| c. of securing God's favor             | g. of making oneself approved by God |
| d. of making oneself acceptable to God |                                      |

It is a religion of self-righteousness—of becoming as righteous and good as a person can—of earning and meriting God's favor—of working one's way into God's presence.

**There is, of course, a severe fallacy with this approach to God.**

- ⇒ God is perfect and not a single person is perfect. No person can do enough good to become perfect no matter what he does. In fact, man is already imperfect; and once perfection is lost, it is lost. Imperfection can never become perfection, not by the efforts of human (imperfect) flesh. Imperfection cannot make perfection.

The point is this: no person can ever earn or merit the right to live in God's presence. If a person is ever going to live in God's presence, it will be because God loves the person enough to accept him and to transform him into a perfect person. This is exactly what God does through Jesus Christ. God accepts men *through His Son*, through the love and grace of His Son.

It was this, the gospel of Jesus Christ that Paul had missed. And it is this that so many in the world miss. Paul had never seen the great love of God for man. Yet, *above all men*, he had given his life to seeking after God, doing all the good he could to make himself acceptable to God. But despite all his achievements, he still did not have peace with God. Perfect assurance and confidence—of living eternally with God—was still lacking. This is the message of the present passage: Paul's personal testimony—his rejection of self-righteousness and turning to the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

1. **Paul had achieved the height in self-righteousness (v.4-6).**
2. **Paul sought to win Christ—His righteousness and perfection (v.7-11).**
3. **Paul did not count himself as having yet arrived—he was not yet perfect (v.12-16).**

### **1. (Philippians 3:4-6) Self-righteousness—Paul: Paul had achieved the height of self-righteousness.**

Paul ranks among the greatest of men who have attempted to work their way into God's presence. Paul did all the good he could to secure God's approval. Few if any men have ever attained what Paul did by human effort. Yet, it was all to no avail. His goodness and his attainments did not make him acceptable to God. And there is one primary reason: he could not make himself perfect.

However, note what Paul says: "**If any man thinks he can trust in the works and attainments of his flesh, I more. I can trust and boast in the goodness and morality and works of the flesh as much as any man who has ever lived.**" This is a phenomenal claim, but Paul lists seven privileges and achievements which show the total inadequacy of man to save himself. Paul divided the list under "**Privileges of Birth**" and "**Achievements by Self-Effort.**"

#### **1. The privileges of birth are three in particular.**

- a. "**Circumcised the eighth day**": Paul was saying that he had the *right birth*. A true Jewish family always had its male child circumcised when he was just eight days old. Circumcision was the sign that a person believed in the Old Testament laws and in His promises—in particular the promise that the Jews were the promised and covenant people of God. Paul was claiming to be a true Jewish believer who had the privilege of believing parents.

**Thought 1.** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in birth nor in religious rituals and ceremonies. **Yet, how many people think they are acceptable to God because they.....**

1. have godly parents?
2. have a godly spouse?
3. have godly children?
4. have godly friends?
5. have kept religious rituals and ceremonies?

How many expect the godliness of others to rub off on them—to count for them and to make them acceptable to God?

b. **"Of the stock of Israel"**: Paul was saying that he had the *right national heritage* and a very special relationship with God. He was born in the right nation, among the right people. The name Israel goes back to the time when God changed Jacob's name to Israel. Jacob had a special need, and God met his need in a very special way through a dream and changed his name ([Genesis 32:28](#)). When a Jew wished to stress his special relationship to God, he called himself an Israelite; that is, he was of the nation and descent of Israel which had a very special relationship with God and who had received a very special name from God.

**Thought 1.** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in ancestors nor in social superiority. Yet, how many think that being born in a Christian nation and surrounded by Christian principles carry some merit with God? How many feel that the people of a so called Christian nation are more acceptable to God than the heathen of some idol-worshipping tribe in the depths of a jungle? How many feel that they have some merit with God because they have a Christian name? How many feel they have a little better relationship with God and are a little more acceptable to God because they live in a so called religious nation?

c. **"Of the tribe of Benjamin"**: Benjamin was considered the aristocratic tribe of Israel because of the tribe's loyalty when so many were disloyal ([1 Kings 12:1](#)) and because of the tribe's courageous acts throughout Israel's history ([Judges 5:14](#); [Hosea 5:8](#)). Paul was saying that he was of the *highest aristocracy, of the most noble, of the most respectable persons of Israel.*

**Thought 1.** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in social or religious status. **Yet, how many feel they are more acceptable to God because they belong to.....**

1. • an upper class?
2. • a more elite church?
3. • a more dynamic church?
4. • a more active ministry?

**2. The achievements by self-effort are four in number.**

a. **"An Hebrew of the Hebrews"**: Paul claimed to have the *right language* and the right customs. When the Jews were conquered and scattered over the world, a believing Jew refused to give up his Jewish language and customs. He continued using Hebrew and he continued to practice Jewish customs. Every Jew did not, but Paul says he and his family did. What Paul meant was that he had the mark of faithfulness. He had deliberately kept the Hebrew tongue and refused to forget it. In his day, this was extremely difficult, for the Jews were literally scattered across the world and the world had one common language,

Greek. But Paul remained steadfast. He learned and refused to forget the right language. He was loyal to the elect race of God. He was untinged by other philosophies.

**Thought 1.** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in religious faithfulness, nor in a spiritual language, nor in the ability to know and speak in religious terms. **Yet, how many think that they are acceptable to God because they.....**

1. do good and are faithful in being good?
2. are faithful in studying their religion, the Bible, and the great doctrines of the faith?
3. are faithful in talking about and sharing spiritual things?
4. know and use religious terms and languages?

- b. **"A Pharisee":** Paul claimed to have had the *right religion*; to have been a Pharisee. The Pharisees were strict religionists, so strict their very name meant The Separated Ones. Paul said that he was of the strictest religious sect ever known. He devoted his whole life to the most *separated* and demanding religion ever known to man. He achieved *separation*, an exacting separation from other men.

**Thought 1.** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in religion, not even in being a follower of the true religion. Yet, how many feel the very opposite?

- c. **"Zeal":** Paul had zealously stood and fought for his religion. He hotly pursued and persecuted the church. Paul had such a zeal for his religion that he sought to wipe out any cause that differed from his ([Acts 22:2-21](#); [Acts 26:4-32](#); [1 Cor. 15:8-10](#); [Galatians 1:13](#)).

**Thought 1.** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in religious commitments or zeal. Few have ever been committed to their religion like Paul—few have ever been as faithful to the worship services, ordinances, rituals, and ceremonies of his religion as Paul. Paul was a religionist among religionists. Few have ever proclaimed and protected their religion like Paul. Paul was as zealous as a person could be in trying to reach converts for his religion and in keeping his religion as pure as he could. Paul was full of zeal for his religion, as faithful as a person could be.

- d. **"Blameless":** Paul claimed he had sought to keep the law and he had kept it—completely and fully. This does not mean that Paul was sinless; it means that when Paul sinned, he obeyed the law and took his sacrifice to the temple. He obeyed all the commandments, rituals, and ceremonies just like Scripture said. He followed all the laws and instructions of the Scripture. He was blameless—ritually and ceremonially—in the righteousness of the law.

**Thought 1.** Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in keeping all the rituals and ceremonies of religion. They are not even found in keeping all the commandments of the Scripture.

**"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" ([Matthew 5:20](#)).**

**"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" ([Matthew 7:22-23](#)).**

**"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" ([Romans 3:20](#)).**

**"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" ([Romans 10:3](#)).**

**"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" ([2 Cor. 10:12](#)).**

**"Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?" ([Proverbs 20:6](#)).**

**"There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness" ([Proverbs 30:12](#)).**

## **[2. \(Philippians 3:7-11\) Righteousness— Perfection— Paul: Paul sought to win Christ, to win His righteousness and His perfection.](#)**

The one thing in life that Paul sought was the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ. He knew that no matter how good he could become, he could never become perfect. He still came short and he was still doomed to face death. Therefore, his only hope for living forever was the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ. He had to trust Christ; he had to focus his heart and life—all he was and had—upon Jesus Christ. He had to trust the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ to *cover him*.

Therefore, he cast his heart and life upon Christ. He lived for Jesus Christ, and he trusted God to honor his commitment. He trusted God to *count his faith* as the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ. If God did not do this, he was lost and doomed to death forever; he could never gain perfection. His only hope was Christ and Christ alone. This is what the present passage is all about. Paul believed with all his heart that if he trusted Jesus Christ—that if he sought after the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ with all that he was and had—God would take his faith and *count it as righteousness*. God would honor his commitment to His Son by accepting and giving him eternal life.



Note *five significant points*.

**1. Paul had a *past experience with Christ*: there was a time when he had counted *his own righteousness as loss* ([Phil. 3:7](#)). Paul was referring to his conversion experience. There was a time when he had given up his own self-righteousness and works, his own attempts to become perfect. There was a time when he had accepted the fact that he could not become perfect—he could not gain righteousness—he could not make himself perfectly acceptable to God.**

- a. Note that this is a past experience, a once-for-all experience. It is a definite time when Paul made a definite decision—a decision that he was unable to secure righteousness and perfection himself. If he was to become righteous and perfect, he had to trust the love of God—that God loved him enough to cover him with the righteousness and perfection of Christ.
- b. Note also that this did not mean that Paul quit trying to live for God. On the contrary, it meant that Paul tried more diligently than ever to live for God. When God saw Paul's total commitment to Christ, God knew that Paul's faith was genuine. He knew that Paul really believed that Christ was his Savior, his hope for perfection and righteousness—for eternity. If Paul had not committed himself totally to Christ, God would have known his faith was not genuine and God would not have saved Paul.

**Thought 1.** God sees our faith; whether or not it is genuine. Genuine faith makes a total commitment to Jesus Christ. A person who truly believes in Jesus Christ gives all he is and has to Christ. He counts his own effort and works, his own righteousness as loss—as nothing—in order to gain Christ.

**"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" ([Luke 9:23](#)).**

**"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" ([Hebrews 11:6](#)).**

**2. Paul had a *continuous experience with Christ*: he constantly counted all things as loss and as waste in order to win Christ ([Phil. 3:8](#)). The word "count" is in the present tense; it is continuous action. When a person has made the decision to seek after Christ, he is *to continue* to seek after the knowledge of Christ—to learn all he can about the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ.**

1. It is not a matter of making a decision to follow Christ, and then turning and walking on as a person has always walked—doing his own thing and fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind.
2. It is making a decision to follow Christ and continuing to seek after the knowledge of Him—continuing to seek to know Him more and more.

- a. Note that the knowledge of Christ is said to be excellent: it is the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. The knowledge of Jesus Christ is the most excellent knowledge in all the world. No other knowledge can give a person righteousness and perfection. No other knowledge can make a person acceptable to God and give him the right to live eternally.
- b. Note what Paul says: **"I have suffered the loss of all things."** The words **"have suffered"** mean to forfeit and to cast away. The phrase all things includes not only the religious position Paul had attained, but the "social, financial, intellectual, and political" gains he had made as well (**Lehman Strauss, *Devotional Studies in Philippians*, p.163**). **Wuest** gives a graphic description of what Paul gave up to become a Christian believer.

*"Paul was a citizen of Tarsus. At the time he lived there, only families of wealth and reputation were allowed to retain their Tarsian citizenship. This throws a flood of light upon Paul's early life. He was born into a home of wealth and culture. His family were wealthy Jews living in one of the most progressive of oriental cities. All this Paul left to become a poor itinerant missionary.*

*"But not only did he forfeit all this when he was saved, but his parents would have nothing to do with a son who had in their estimation dishonored them by becoming one of those hated, despised Christians. They had reared him in the lap of luxury, had sent him to the Jewish school of theology in Jerusalem to sit at the feet of the great Gamaliel, and had given him an excellent training in Greek culture at the University of Tarsus, a Greek school of learning. But they had now cast him off. He was still forfeiting all that he had held dear, what for? He tells us, 'that I may win Christ'" (**Kenneth S. Wuest. *Wuest's Word Studies*, Vol.2. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966, p.91**).*

**"Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee" ([Mark 10:28](#)).**

**"And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me" ([Luke 5:27](#)).**

**"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" ([Luke 9:24](#)).**

**"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" ([Luke 14:33](#)).**

**"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" ([Luke 18:29-30](#)).**

**"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" ([Phil. 3:8](#)).**

**3. Paul sought a future experience with Christ: he sought to be found in Christ ([Phil. 3:9](#)).** Paul was looking ahead either to death or to the return of Christ. When he came face to face with God, he wanted to be *found in Christ*. He wanted to stand before God in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, not in his own righteousness.

Note that the righteousness of God is *Christ Himself*. The righteousness of God does not refer to behavior or works or deeds of righteousness. No person can ever secure the righteousness of God by behavior or works or deeds—no matter how good the works or deeds may be. The righteousness of God is Jesus Christ Himself. A person has to trust the righteousness of Christ to cover him if he wishes to become acceptable to God.

**"Christ, the righteousness which is of God" ([Phil. 3:9](#)).**

**"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference" ([Romans 3:21-22](#)).**

**"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For *Christ* is the end of the law for *righteousness* to every one that believeth" ([Romans 10:3-4](#)).**

**"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" ([1 Cor. 1:30](#)).**

**4. Paul sought a victorious experience with Christ: he sought to know Christ—to know His glorious power over the world and all that is in the world ([Phil. 3:10](#)).** This is one of the Bible's great verses of Scripture, a verse that should be memorized and that should dominate the believer's life. As clearly seen throughout this whole passage, Paul's great pursuit in life was to know Christ.

This verse spells out exactly what he meant by knowing Christ.

- a. To know Christ is to know the power of His resurrection. The power of the Lord's resurrection refers to three great things.
- b. To know Christ is to know the fellowship of His sufferings. Most of us are willing to share in the blessings of Christ but we want nothing to do with the sufferings of Christ. We shrink from the ridicule, questioning, and abuse He had to bear. There is nothing pleasant about suffering pain and having people oppose us. There is nothing wrong with being honest about the fact. Paul said that he wanted to know the *fellowship* of the Lord's sufferings. That is, he wanted to share in *the purpose for which Christ*

*was suffering.* Why did Christ suffer? He suffered because He proclaimed the righteousness and salvation of God—because He proclaimed the way men could become acceptable to God and live forever. Paul was saying that he wanted to suffer right along with Christ, suffer for the same cause—suffer for proclaiming the righteousness and salvation of God.

There is no question about it: if we live for Christ—proclaim the righteousness and salvation of God—we shall suffer persecution. Why? Why would the world persecute anyone who brings the hope of eternal life to them? Because some persons want to live their lives like they want, and a righteous life and message condemns them. Therefore, they oppose anything that keeps them from living a life that pleases their own personal desires and flesh. The believer must know: he shall suffer persecution if he truly follows Christ.

**"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" ([Acts 14:22](#)).**

**"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" ([Phil. 1:29](#)).**

**"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" ([2 Tim. 2:10](#)).**

**"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" ([2 Tim. 3:12](#)).**

**"But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ" ([1 Peter 3:14-16](#)).**

**"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" ([1 Peter 2:21](#)).**

**Note one other thing:** God draws close to the believer when he suffers for the cause of Christ. God gives a very special sense of His presence, love, and care when the believer is suffering. In fact, His presence is so near and dear it is called "the spirit of glory and of God" which rests upon the suffering believer.

**"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified" ([1 Peter 4:14](#)).**

- c. To know Christ is to be made conformable to His death. Jesus Christ subjected Himself totally to God. He put His own flesh and desires to death; He did only what God willed and desired. Even when He died, His flesh did not desire to die. He did not want to take the sins of the world upon Himself and be separated from God ([Matthew 26:39, 42](#)). But He subjected Himself to God's will. God willed Him to die for the sins of the world; therefore, Christ subjected His flesh and desires to do exactly what God willed. He subjected His flesh and desires and died for the sins of men.

Paul sought to be conformed to the death of Christ. He sought to subject himself totally to God—to put his flesh and desires to death and to do only the will and desire of God.

1. Paul sought to *deny himself and take up the cross* of Christ daily.

**"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" ([Luke 9:23](#)).**

2. Paul sought to *crucify his old man* with Christ.

**"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" ([Romans 6:6](#)).**

3. Paul sought to *count himself dead to sin* but alive to God.

**"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" ([Romans 6:11](#)).**

4. Paul sought to *kill himself* all day long.

**"As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" ([Romans 8:36](#)).**

5. Paul sought to *die daily*.

**"I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily" ([1 Cor. 15:31](#)).**

6. Paul sought to be always *delivered to death* for Jesus' sake.

**"For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" ([2 Cor. 4:11](#)).**

7. Paul sought to be *crucified with Christ*.

**"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" ([Galatians 2:20](#)).**

8. Paul sought to be *dead with Christ*.

**"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances" ([Col. 2:20](#)).**

**"It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him" ([2 Tim. 2:11](#)).**

**5. Paul sought an eternal experience with Christ: he sought to be resurrected from the dead ([Phil. 3:11](#)).** Paul sought to use all means—to commit himself totally—for this one great purpose: to attain to the resurrection of the dead. The words **"if by any means"** are not expressing doubt and uncertainty. Paul was not questioning the resurrection nor if he would be resurrected. Paul was simply saying what he had already stated ([Phil. 3:7-11](#)). He uses all he is and has—all the means at his disposal—for this one great purpose: to attain to the resurrection from the dead. He is totally committed to that glorious day of redemption. He lives for that day and for that day alone.

What is so significant about the resurrection of the dead? What is to be so different about that day? At death, we go to be with the Lord. Quicker than the eye can blink, when our time comes, we shall stand face to face with Christ. What is the difference between meeting Christ then and the resurrection? Why did Paul long for the resurrection over and above his meeting the Lord at death? There are at least two significant reasons why the resurrection, the glorious day of redemption, takes precedence over our meeting the Lord at death.

- a. The glorious day of resurrection will launch the events that will soon bring about the new heavens and earth. At death, when we go to be with the Lord, the world continues on in its sin and shame, disease and death, evil and corruption.

***God is still being.....***

1. cursed and dishonored.
2. denied and ignored.
3. rebelled against and rejected.

But as stated, the resurrection will launch the events that bring about the glorious day of redemption—the new heavens and earth—the day when all evil and sin and the cursing and dishonor of God will be stopped. God will become All in All: worshipped and served in glory and majesty, dominion and power forever and ever.

**"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" ([John 5:28-29](#)).**

**"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" ([John 6:40](#)).**

**"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" ([John 11:25](#)).**

**"And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" ([Acts 24:15](#)).**

**"Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you" ([2 Cor. 4:14](#)).**

**"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" ([1 Thes. 4:16-17](#)).**

**"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" ([2 Peter 3:10-13](#)).**

**"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" ([Rev. 21:1](#)).**

- b.** The glorious day of resurrection will be the day when believers will have earthly bodies transformed and recreated into perfect eternal bodies. At death when we go to be with the Lord, we do not receive our perfect eternal body. We will either be given temporary spiritual bodies or live with Christ as disembodied spirits. But as stated, at the resurrection the elements of our present bodies will be called forth by God from all over the world, and the elements shall be transformed into perfect and eternal bodies. And we shall live with and for God forever.

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" ([1 Cor. 15:42-44](#)).

"And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" ([1 Cor. 15:49-54](#); cp. [1 Cor. 15:12-58](#)).

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" ([2 Cor. 5:1-4](#)).

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" ([Phil. 3:20-21](#)).

### **[3. \(Philippians 3:12-16\) Righteousness—Perfection—Paul: Paul did not count himself as having yet attained—he was not yet perfect.](#)**

Perfection is the great end of the believer. God has apprehended or laid hold of the believer for one reason only: to perfect the believer—to make him perfect so that he can live and worship and serve Christ forever.

Now note a critical point: no person achieves perfection on this earth. The fact is so evident to the thinking and honest man that it is actually ridiculous to even make the statement. Yet, too many are so narrow in their thinking that they seldom if ever grasp what perfection would really mean.

**For example.....**

1. Consider the brain and the mind. It has been estimated that man uses only *one-tenth of one percent* of his mental capacity. Imagine how far short this is of perfection!



2. Consider the body. What would a perfect body be like? A body that never desired, thought, or did wrong; that never came up short; that never aged, deteriorated, died or decayed?

The examples could go on and on, but note what Paul says: he had not attained perfection. In fact, he was always emphasizing how far short he came.

**"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" ([Romans 7:18-19](#)).**

**"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God" ([2 Cor. 3:5](#)).**

**"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" ([Ephes. 3:8](#)).**

Beyond doubt, Paul was one of the greatest men who has ever lived. The great *Book of Second Corinthians* clearly shows this. If Paul was so short of perfection, how much further are we? The point bears repeating: no person achieves perfection on this earth. But note: Paul says five significant things.

**1. Paul followed after perfection, after his God-given purpose.** When Christ saved Paul, that was just the beginning, not the end. He had been saved to *live for Christ and to serve Christ*, and as long as he was on this earth he was going to *live for Christ* and do all he could *to serve Christ*. The word "**follow after**" (*diōkō*) means to press; to pursue just like a runner in a race. There was no place for walking, much less for sitting or lying around in comfort, complacency and lethargy. Christ had saved Paul for perfection—to attain to the resurrection of the dead—and as long as Paul was on this earth, he was going to press and run after perfection.

- a. Paul was going to do all he could to help the Lord in the Lord's great task of perfecting him.
- b. Paul was going to do all he could to lay hold of perfection—the perfection for which the Lord had laid hold of him.

**Thought 1.** There is no such thing as a genuine believer sitting still after he has been saved.

**The believer must not.....**

1. become comfortable, complacent, lethargic, or lazy.
2. waste time and lose opportunity.
3. begin to think he is safe and secure forever; therefore, he can sometimes do what he likes and give in to his own desires.

The believer must follow, run, and press after perfection—the perfection for which Christ has saved him. The believer must be active in living for Christ.

**"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:24-27).**

**"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair" (2 Cor. 4:7-8).**

**"Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" (Galatians 5:7).**

**"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).**

**2. Paul worked at forgetting the past.** This is a verse that is of enormous help to believers who have failed God—miserably failed Him. Paul had so failed God, and he was always confessing how far short he came (**Romans 7:18-19; 2 Cor. 3:5; Ephes. 3:8**).

**Paul faced what so many of us face:**

- a. failure and shortcoming
- b. the struggle to forget it and to move on

How does a person do this? It is one of the most difficult things in all the world to do. And it is especially difficult if others are not forgiving and willing to let the believer put his failure behind him. But note: Paul tells us how to deal with the past. How? By concentrating and controlling the mind and by reaching forth to those things which are before us.

**Note the concentration and focus:**

- a. but *one thing*.
- b. but *this one thing I do*.

In one focused act, we must forget the things that are past and reach forth to those things that are before us. The act involves two parts: both forgetting and reaching forth. The past cannot be forgotten without reaching forth to what lies ahead. A person cannot sit around moaning and regretting the past. To do so is to be concentrating upon the past. The things of the past are to be *forgotten*. The things of the future are to be the focus of

the mind. The believer is to zero in on the things at hand and on the things that lie ahead. If we do this, there is no time to wallow around in the past and its failure.

**"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" ([Luke 13:24](#)).**

**"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" ([1 Cor. 15:58](#)).**

**"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" ([Galatians 6:9](#)).**

**"Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily" ([Col. 1:29](#)).**

**"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin" ([Hebrews 12:4](#)).**

**"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" ([1 Peter 1:13](#)).**

**"Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" ([Rev. 3:11](#)).**

**3. Paul pressed on toward the goal, toward God's purpose in Christ Jesus.** What is God's purpose for us in Christ Jesus? It is to be conformed to the image of Christ—to be perfect even as He is perfect.

**Once we are perfect.....**

- a) we shall be incorruptible and eternal.
- b) we shall live in honor and glory.
- c) we shall live in God's perfect presence and power.
- d) we shall live in perfect righteousness and purity.
- e) we shall live worshipping and serving God eternally.

Perfection means eternal life, a perfect life that never ends—that goes on and on doing the things that God created us to do. Perfection means the eternal life of Jesus Christ—being conformed to the perfection of Jesus Christ.

**"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" ([Romans 8:16-17](#)).**

**"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" ([Romans 8:29](#)).**

**"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" ([Phil. 3:21](#)).**

**"Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" ([Col. 3:24](#)).**

**"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" ([1 John 3:2](#)).**

**4. Paul kept his mind on growing and maturing in Christ.** All believers are ordained by God to be perfect in Christ Jesus, and we shall be perfected in the glorious day of redemption. Let us, therefore, as many as are ordained by God to be perfected, keep our minds on perfection.

**Note: this is sometimes difficult to do because we live in a world that is gripped by the lust for.....**

1. comfort and ease
2. pleasure and plenty
3. possessions and recognition
4. indulgence and extravagance
5. more and more

But note something: God will not let the genuine believer rest unless his mind is on righteousness and purity, the gospel and witnessing. God pricks our hearts, reveals that we are failing and coming short. God stirs us to get our minds back upon living like we should—upon pressing for perfection.

**"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" ([Matthew 5:48](#)).**

**"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" ([2 Cor. 13:11](#)).**

**"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" ([Ephes. 4:13](#)).**

**"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" ([Col. 1:28](#)).**

**"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God" ([Hebrews 6:1](#)).**

**"From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" ([James 4:1](#)).**

**5. Paul maintained the growth he had already achieved.** Too many live up and down lives. We gain some discipline and some growth, then before too long, we slip right back.

**It may involve.....**

1. lying, stealing, or cheating
2. devotions or prayer
3. control of thoughts and mind
4. discipline of body and habits

Growth takes place, but then some circumstance or interruption takes place, and the *new man* and new growth are forsaken and we slip back into being the *old man*, living just like we used to live.

But note the strong exhortation of Scripture: take what you have learned and attained and walk by that rule; keep your mind upon that rule.

**"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" ([Romans 8:6](#)).**

**"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" ([Galatians 5:16](#)).**

**"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise" ([Ephes. 5:15](#)).**

**"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" ([1 John 1:7](#)).**

**"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" ([1 John 2:6](#)).**

# THE "PRESSING ON" OF THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, Philippians 3:1-21

## D. Pressing On: Marking Those Who Walk as Examples, Philippians 3:17-21

**(Philippians 3:17-21) Introduction:** this is one of the most important passages in the Bible. It has to do with the example we set before the world and before our families and friends. The way we live and what we do influences people. We may not want to influence them, but it does not matter whether we want to or not: they are influenced. Family, friends, and children—everyone who knows us—watch us; and they follow both the good and the bad of our example. It may be conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional; we may be willing or we may not be willing for them to follow in our steps—it matters not—they follow our example.

We influence people by how we live and by what we do.

1. If we follow good and do good, it encourages them to do good.
2. If we follow bad and do bad, it sets a pattern of bad before others. It even causes some (in particular, the young and immature) to think that since we did it and still got along fairly well, they can do it and get along fairly well, too.

**The point is this:** the life we live sets a pattern for others to follow. Others are going to follow us no matter what we do. This says something to us, something of critical importance: we must live lives on the highest plane possible. We must set the most dynamic example possible. We must set the most perfect pattern possible for others to follow. But it also says something else: we must follow after those who live on the highest plane of life. We must mark those who walk as examples and follow after the great traits of their lives. We must take those who live as examples and dissect the traits of their lives, and apply those traits to our own lives. This is the subject of the present passage: marking those who walk as examples for us all.

1. **Reason 1: some walk as examples (v.17).**
2. **Reason 2: many walk as enemies of the cross (v.18-19).**
3. **Reason 3: the believer is a citizen of heaven (v.20-21).**

### 1. (Philippians 3:17) Paul— Testimony: we must mark those who walk as examples, first, because they do walk as examples.

Note what Paul said: he and others followed Christ ever so diligently; therefore, they were dynamic examples as to how people should walk and live. When a person lives a life on the highest plane—when he lives like Christ said to live—he is an example. He is living just like we all should live: just as Christ said.

**What did Paul mean?** Was he claiming perfection—claiming to be the perfect pattern for men to follow? No! A thousand times no! In fact, the very opposite is true.

**He had just declared.....**

1. that he could never stand before God in his own righteousness [Phil. 3:9](#)).
2. that he had not yet attained ([Phil. 3:12](#)).
3. that he was not perfect ([Phil. 3:12](#)).
4. that he had not apprehended that for which Christ had laid hold of him ([Phil. 3:13](#)).

What then did Paul mean? Just what he said. He was a dynamic example...

1. in forgetting the things that were past.
2. in reaching forth to the things that lay ahead.
3. in pressing toward the prize, even the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul was a dynamic example in seeking to follow Christ. He was forever reaching forth, forever pressing to be like Christ. He never reached the perfect pattern of Christ—he could not, not as long as he was a man—but he pressed and pressed to be all he could for Christ. It is this that Paul sets before us as a pattern.

**We are to follow Paul.....**

1. in forgetting the past, no matter how terrible it is.
2. in reaching forth to the things that lie ahead.
3. in pressing toward the prize, even the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

We will never achieve perfection, not in this life, but we are to follow after Christ and seek to be like Him. Now note the point: when we see a person sharing Christ with such dynamic commitment and energy, that person is an example for us. We should follow that person. He is following after Christ, doing the very thing we should be doing. Therefore, he is a living example for us.

Note the word "**example**" (*tupon*). The underlying meaning of the word is that of an imprint or mark made by a blow or some mould or dye. The idea is that we are to be seeking Christ with such diligence that our example will be like a powerful blow being thrown at those around us. Take the most powerful boxing blow of the heavyweight champion and our example for Christ should strike others with just as much power.

**Thought 1.** No believer should ever claim or think that he has come anywhere close to perfection. But *every believer* should follow Christ with so much commitment and diligence that he is a dynamic example for others. Every believer should be able to say "follow me"—follow my seeking after Christ—my seeking to be like Christ.

"Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me" ([1 Cor. 4:16](#)).

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" ([1 Cor. 11:1](#)).

"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample" ([Phil. 3:17](#)).

"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" ([Phil. 4:9](#)).

"And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost" ([1 Thes. 1:6](#)).

"Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe" ([1 Thes. 2:10](#)).

"For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you" ([2 Thes. 3:7](#)).

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" ([1 Tim. 4:12](#)).

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" ([2 Tim. 1:13](#)).

"In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity" ([Titus 2:7](#)).

"But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation" ([James 5:12](#)).

## 2. ([Philippians 3:18-19](#)) Testimony— Jesus Christ, Cross: we must mark those who walk as examples, second, because many walk as enemies of the cross.

Who are the enemies of the cross? Many commentators say they are the hypocritical and false believers within the church, those who are nominal Christians. They say that the word "walk" is used of Christians in [Phil. 3:17](#); therefore, it also refers to church members in [Phil. 3:18](#). It is also said that Paul would weep only for false believers within the church.

It is true that Paul could have been referring to false and hypocritical believers within the church; however, **every unbeliever both in and out of the church walks as an enemy of the cross.....**

1. whether the leader of a nation or a movement who is set on wiping out the church and the cross.
2. whether a professing believer who really doubts the substitutionary death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.



Note something else as well: it is a common thing for believers to weep for the lost. Certainly Paul wept many times over the lost of the world and not just over false believers within the church. ([Matthew 23:37](#); [Luke 13:34](#); [Romans 9:1-3](#); [Romans 10:1](#); [1 Tim. 2:1-4](#).)

**"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" ([1 Tim. 2:1-4](#)).**

Again, who are the enemies of the cross? It seems best to take the verse for just what it says: there are many who walk as "**the enemies of the cross**"—no matter who they are, whether within or without the church. Unquestionably, the enemies of the cross are many. Note what is said about them.

**1. Their end is "destruction" (*apōleia*).** The word means "**perdition, destroyed, or slain; to lose one's well-being; to be wasted and ruined and given a worthless existence**". It does not mean that a person will cease to exist. It means a person will be destroyed and devastated and condemned to a worthless existence. He will suffer waste and loss and ruin forever and ever.

If a person stands as an enemy of the cross, he shall be destroyed. It does not matter who he is, either within or without the church, he shall suffer perdition, that is, utter destruction. **Who is an enemy of the cross?**

**It is the person.....**

1. who rejects the cross of Christ as the only way to God.
2. who does not accept the death of Christ as payment for his sins.
3. who does not believe that Christ died for him, that is, as the punishment for his transgressions.
4. who does not believe that the penalty for his imperfection was borne by Christ on the cross.
5. who does not approach God claiming that he is coming by the death of Christ—that is, that he wants God to accept him in the death of Christ.
6. who claims that there are other ways to approach God—ways other than the cross of Christ.
7. who considers the cross of Christ to be foolishness.
8. who opposes and curses Christ and His cross.
9. who persecutes and attempts to stamp out Christ and His cross.
10. who denies and questions that Christ died for our sins.

**"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" ([Matthew 25:46](#); cp. [Matthew 25:25-45](#)).**

"But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation" ([Mark 3:29](#)).

"...he [Christ] will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable" ([Luke 3:17](#)).

"But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile" ([Romans 2:8-9](#)).

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" ([2 Thes. 1:7-9](#)).

"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people" ([Hebrews 10:29-30](#)).

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" ([2 Peter 2:9](#)).

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" ([Rev. 20:15](#)).

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" ([Rev. 21:8](#)).

2. Their god is their "belly" (*koilia*), that is, their appetite, their sensuality, their desire for the physical pleasures of this world. Physical and material gratification is their god.

**They center their lives around.....**

- |                             |                                   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. possessions and property | f. pleasure and sex               |
| b. houses and furnishings   | g. acceptance and social standing |
| c. food and appetite        | h. money and wealth               |
| d. comfort and plenty       | i. honor and fame                 |
| e. position and success     |                                   |

Just take a moment and think upon any of the above, how some persons center and focus their lives upon such things. Some persons spend more time in front of a mirror or eating or thinking about acceptance or success or possessions or some business deal than they do in prayer.

**The point is this:** when a person has a craving and an appetite for such things, they become his god. The craving begins to consume his thoughts, energy, and effort. Before long his craving is taking up so much of his energy that he has very little if any time for God or for anything else. His appetite and craving, or as the Scripture says, his belly, becomes his god. Marvin Vincent quotes the Cyclops in Euripides as saying: "**My flocks which I sacrifice to no one but myself, and not to the gods, and to this my belly the greatest of the gods: for to eat and drink each day, and to give one's self no trouble, this is the god for wise men**" (*Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol.3, p.452).

**"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" ([Romans 8:5-6](#)).**

**"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" ([Romans 8:13](#)).**

**"For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" ([Romans 16:18](#)).**

**"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" ([Ephes. 4:17-19](#)).**

**3. Their glory is their shame.** This simply means that men boast in their sins and shame.

**They boast in and pride themselves.....**

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>a.</b> in their comfort     | <b>f.</b> in their partying            |
| <b>b.</b> in their drunkenness | <b>g.</b> in what they eat             |
| <b>c.</b> in their gluttony    | <b>h.</b> in what they have purchased  |
| <b>d.</b> in their conquests   | <b>i.</b> in their authority and power |
| <b>e.</b> in their sex         | <b>j.</b> in how much they have        |

**"And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" ([Luke 12:15](#)).**

**"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints" ([Ephes. 5:3](#)).**

**"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence [desire], and covetousness, which is idolatry" ([Col. 3:5](#)).**

**"Let your conversation [behavior] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" ([Hebrews 13:5](#)).**

**"For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth" ([Psalm 10:3](#)).**

**"They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" ([Psalm 49:6-7](#)).**

**"Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain" ([Proverbs 25:14](#)).**

**"Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" ([Proverbs 27:1](#)).**

**4. They keep their mind on earthly things.** This is simply another way of saying that a person is worldly. He focuses his mind, energy and effort upon the things of the world. But note: the things of the world include much more than the physical and material gratifications of this world.

**Worldly things also include the commendable things that are accepted by society such as.....**

1. religions and spiritual pursuits
2. self-development programs
3. rules of virtue and morality
4. the pursuit of ambition or success
5. employment and jobs and business

As stated, such things are commendable and some are even necessary for survival and health. But the point is this: the basis of our lives must be the cross of Christ, not the things of this world. The only hope for conquering the ills and corruption of society and the evil and death of man is the cross of Christ. Nothing on this earth, no matter how good and beneficial it is, can give us life—not abundant and eternal life. Only Jesus Christ can give us life that conquers all and that infuses us with life that lasts forever. Therefore, the focus of our lives must be Christ and His cross. Yes, we must give our attention to our jobs and families and to the other good and beneficial pursuits of life, but underlying everything we do must be Christ and His cross. He and His cross must be the consuming passion and purpose of our lives. The person who sets his mind on earthly things is an enemy of the cross of Christ.

**"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" ([Romans 8:5-6](#)).**

**"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" ([Romans 12:2](#)).**

**"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" ([2 Cor. 10:5](#)).**

### **3. ([Philippians 3:20-21](#)) Heaven— Believer: we must mark those who walk as examples, third, because the believer is a citizen of heaven.**

**Note three points.**

**1. The believer's life is to be heaven-centered, for his citizenship is in heaven.** The word **"conversation"** (*politeuma*) means citizenship in this context. Remember that Philippi was a Roman colony and its citizens, although in Macedonia, were citizens of Rome. As pointed out earlier, the citizens of Roman colonies lived as Romans: they dressed as Romans, spoke the Roman language, lived by the laws of Rome, engaged in Roman pleasures and social affairs, and worshipped the Roman gods. Despite the fact that they lived in Macedonia, their citizenship was in Rome.

**The point to see is this:** the Philippian believers knew exactly what it meant to live in one place and to be a citizen of another place.

**They knew exactly what it would mean to live upon the earth and.....**

1. to dress as a citizen of heaven and not of the earth.
2. to speak as a citizen of heaven and not of the earth.
3. to engage in the pleasures of a citizen of heaven and not of the earth.
4. to live by the laws of heaven as well as the laws of earth.
5. to worship the God of heaven and not the religions and gods of this earth.

**Thought 1.** Believers are to live as citizens of heaven and not of this world. The point is forceful.

**"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" ([Luke 10:20](#)).**

**"That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" ([Luke 22:30](#)).**

**"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" ([Ephes. 2:19](#)).**

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" ([Phil. 3:20](#)).

"By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" ([Hebrews 11:9-10](#)).

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" ([Hebrews 11:13-16](#)).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" ([1 Peter 1:3-4](#)).

"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" ([Rev. 21:27](#)).

**2. The believer's life is to be focused upon the return of Christ.** He is to be looking for the Lord's return—constantly looking—looking every day of his life. **Lehman Struss** makes a strong point in the following:

*"The greatest event in any country on earth is a visit from its chief emperor. History records the most elaborate preparations and memorials for such an event. Special coins have been minted, commemorative stamps issued, and highways built. Looking forward to the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is the highlight of Christian expectation. We should be dwelling daily in this thought of His return....Imagine how the residents in your neighborhood would feel if the President of the United States had announced that he was making a personal appearance in your community. I feel certain there would be some special preparations for his coming" ([Devotional Studies in Philippians](#), p.207f).*

**Kenneth Wuest** points out that the Greek word "**look**" is made up of three words put together.

**There is.....**

1. the word "**receive**" which speaks of welcoming as the welcoming of a guest. It also has the idea of preparation for the guest.
2. the word "**off**" which speaks of withdrawing one's attention from other objects.

3. the word "out" which has the idea of waiting for, of stretching out the neck and waiting out or for the return of Christ. (*Philippians*, Vol.1, p.102.)

Combined together, the word "look" (*apekdechometha*) means "to yearn, to eagerly look and wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus to take His dear people to heaven".

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" ([Matthew 24:44](#)).

"And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come" ([Luke 19:13](#)).

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" ([John 14:1-2](#)).

"So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" ([1 Cor. 1:7](#)).

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" ([1 Thes. 4:16-18](#)).

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" ([Titus 2:12-13](#)).

"Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father" ([1 John 2:24](#)).

**3. The believer's life is to focus upon the glorious body he is to receive when Christ returns.**

- a. Right now the believer's body is vile, that is, lowly and humiliating.

**The human body is so lowly and humiliating.....**

1. • because it has its origin out of the earth: it is nothing more than earthly chemicals or human flesh.
2. • because it is subject to sin and selfishness, evil and destruction.
3. • because it is so weak: it becomes sick and diseased, injured and maimed, aged and deteriorated.
4. • because it is corruptible and dying, aging and mortal, offering no hope of ever lasting beyond a few short years—no hope whatsoever.

- b. However, note the wonderful declaration: the Lord Jesus Christ shall change the believer's body and fashion or make it just like His glorious body. The word **"fashion"** (*summorphon*) points out a most wonderful thing. The word means the permanent, constant, and unchangeable being of a person. Our bodies shall be fashioned just like the glorious body of Christ. Imagine! To have a body that is permanent, constant, and unchanging. The believer will receive a spiritual body.

**"There is a natural body [soma psuchikon] and there is a spiritual body [soma pneumatikon]" (1 Cor. 15:44).**

**"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:21).**

**We shall be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29).**

**"We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).**

- c. How is such possible? By the power of God, the very power which is able to subdue all things to Christ.

**The very power that created the world and all that is in the world.....**

1. is sovereign over the world.
2. is able to control the world.
3. is able to subdue the world.
4. is able to recreate the world.
5. is able to transform the body of man.

**"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:10-13).**



# THE SECRET OF PEACE—THE PEACE OF GOD HIMSELF, [Philippians 4:1-9](#)

## A. The Steps to Peace (Part I): Standing Fast, Unity, Rejoicing, and Gentleness, [Philippians 4:1-5](#)

[\(Philippians 4:1-9\)](#) **DIVISION OVERVIEW: Peace:** the point of this whole passage ([Phil. 4:1-9](#)) is the peace of God ([Phil 4:7](#)) and the presence of the God of peace ([Phil 4:9b](#)). There are six steps that a believer must take to maintain the peace of God within his heart and life. If the believer fails to take these steps, he grieves the Lord and fellow believers, those who have made a special contribution to his growth, those who look upon him as their "joy and crown" ([Phil. 4:1](#)).

**Unfortunately, when a believer loses his peace with God, several things happen.....**

1. He becomes self-conscious, and sheepishly shy and guilty, and perhaps discouraged and defeated.
2. He becomes cantankerous, critical, murmuring, grumbling, and divisive.
3. He begins to slip back into sin.

The peace he once had with God and man becomes disturbed, and restlessness grips his soul. His restlessness stirs him into being a troublemaker or into sin or else it plummets him into despair and defeat. He has failed; therefore, he feels unworthy and unable to walk victoriously with God. This is the importance of this passage: the secret of peace—the peace of God Himself.

**(4:1-5) Introduction:** this passage is speaking to Christian believers, not to unbelievers. Unbelievers do not have peace with God. They reject, question, deny, curse, and oppose God. God feels no peace between Himself and an unbeliever. No matter how mild the unbeliever's questioning and rejection is, it is still questioning and rejection and not peace. But when an unbeliever surrenders his life and accepts God, peace is made between him and God. Peace rules both within and between the person and God. In fact, God causes a flood of peace to surge through the heart and life of the new believer.

The question is this: once we have the peace of God flooding our lives, how do we maintain that peace? How do we keep the peace of God ruling and reigning within our souls? How do we stay aware that God's very own presence is within us—stay aware that the God of peace lives within our very being? This is the discussion of this passage: the steps to peace.

1. **Step 1: peace comes through standing fast (v.1).**
2. **Step 2: peace comes through agreement and unity (v.2-3).**
3. **Step 3: peace comes through rejoicing continually and repeatedly (v.4).**
4. **Step 4: peace comes through a strong gentleness (v.5).**

## **1. (Philippians 4:1) Standing Fast— Peace: the first step to peace is standing fast.**

This verse is a transitional verse between what has been said and what is about to be said. **Paul has just said.....**

1. there are enemies of the cross of Christ,
2. the believer's citizenship is in heaven,
3. the Lord is going to return and take us out of this world into heaven, transforming our bodies;

.....**therefore, stand fast in the Lord.**

However, note how the verse fits in with what is to follow. **Phil. 4:9** is the conclusion of this section:

**"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:9).**

If a person wants the *God of peace*, he must do the things which Paul taught and did, and one of the major things he taught was to stand fast in the Lord. If a person wishes the God of peace, he must stand fast in the Lord.

The word "**stand fast**" (*stēkete*) means simply to stand firm, persist, persevere. It is the picture of a soldier standing fast against the onslaught of an enemy. He refuses to give ground no matter the pressure and strength of attack. He does not flinch; he is not unstable and he is **never defeated**.

**The Christian believer is to stand fast.....**

1. no matter how great the trial
2. no matter the pressure of the temptation
3. no matter the influence, offer, and allurements made by others.

But how does a believer stand fast? When the temptation to surrender is so appealing and the trial is so terrible, where can the believer find the strength to stand fast? There are two places.

**1. There is the believer's source of strength: the Lord Himself.** Note the words, "**Stand fast in the Lord**." There is only one place the believer can stand fast, and that is "**in the Lord**."

**The believer must be living and moving and having his being in the Lord; that is, he must be.....**

1. praying, talking, and sharing with the Lord all day long.
2. keeping his thoughts upon the Lord: the glorious salvation, hope, and mission He has given believers.
3. serving and ministering for the Lord, bearing testimony of Him and meeting the needs of those who hurt and need help.

When a believer is walking *in the Lord* throughout the day, his mind and thoughts are upon the Lord. Therefore, when the temptations and trials come, he is *conscious and aware of the Lord's presence and strength*. He has been thinking and sharing and talking with the Lord—standing and walking in the Lord—all day long; therefore, he is much more able to stand fast against the temptation and trial.

This is exactly what is meant by being "**in the Lord.**"

1. **Believers are to be walking in prayer and praise all day long.** This is what keeps the peace of God dwelling in their lives—the "peace of God" that conquers all trials and temptations.

**"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 4:6](#)).**

2. **Believers are to be walking with their minds upon the Lord and the things that are pure and honorable.** This is what gives them a sense that the "God of peace" walks with them—the God of peace who gives the believer the power to conquer all trials and temptations.

**"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" ([Phil. 4:8-9](#)).**

3. **Believers are to actually work at bringing every single thought into subjection to Christ.**

**"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" ([2 Cor. 10:5](#)).**

**Thought 1.** The believer who walks praying and keeping his mind and thoughts upon the Lord is the believer who stands fast in the Lord. Common sense tells us this. There is no way to be "in the Lord" unless we are thinking, talking, and walking in the Lord. Very simply we are *in* whatever we are thinking, talking, and walking in. The first step to peace is to "stand fast in the Lord."

**2. There is the encouragement: a minister or brother who loves and cares about his fellow-believer's standing fast.** Note how Paul, the minister, feels about his flock—how deeply he feels for those under his care:

- a. my dearly beloved brothers.
  - b. whom I long to see.
  - c. my joy and crown.
- a. He calls them my "**dearly beloved brothers**": they were his brothers and sisters in Christ. They had all trusted Christ as their Savior and become sons and daughters of the family of God. They were all brothers and sisters of the Lord and Paul is reminding them of this relationship. Therefore, they should all stand fast in the Lord.
- b. He says that he longs to see them. He is in prison and unable to be with them, but his heart is with his dear family, the family of God. Therefore, they need to please his heart by standing fast.
- c. He says they are his "joy and crown." This is probably a reference to the rewards to be given in the glorious day of redemption. The word "**crown**" (*stephanos*) refers to the crown or wreath that was given and sat upon the head of a victorious athlete after he had won the victor's crown in his particular event. Paul says that his joy and crown will be the lives of the Philippians themselves when they all appear before Christ. Therefore, if he was to receive the joy and crown of their presence, they must stand fast in the Lord.

The thing to see is this: the need of believers for personal encouragement. If believers are to stand fast, they must be loved and cared for by the minister and other believers. Nothing encourages us any more than knowing that we are loved and cared for by others. The love of others stirs us to live like we should and to stand fast against temptation and trial.

**Thought 1.** Scripture exhorts believers to stand fast in several things.

**1) Believers are to stand fast in the faith.**

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" ([1 Cor. 16:13](#)).

2) Believers are to stand fast in the liberty of Christ.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" ([Galatians 5:1](#)).

3) Believers are to stand fast in one spirit, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" ([Phil. 1:27](#)).

4) Believers are to stand fast in the Lord which is the secret of peace.

"Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved" ([Phil. 4:1](#)).

5) Believers are to stand fast and hold the teachings or doctrines that have been taught.

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" ([2 Thes. 2:15](#)).

## 2. ([Philippians 4:2-3](#)) Unity— Brotherfood— Restoration: the second step to peace is agreement and unity.

There is no peace if people are.....

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| a. arguing    | f. brawling    |
| b. bickering  | g. wrangling   |
| c. biting     | h. disputing   |
| d. dissenting | i. criticizing |
| e. grumbling  |                |

Paul knew this, a fact that is easily seen by all, but too often ignored by some. Paul knew something else as well, something that the Lord Himself knew. There were some in the Philippian church who were being critical, arguing, grumbling, and quarreling. The Lord had already had Paul to charge the believers:

1. To stand fast in one spirit and in defending the gospel.

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" ([Phil. 1:27](#)).

2. To love each other and to be of one accord and mind.

**"If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Phil. 2:1-2).**

3. To esteem others better than self.

**"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:3-4).**

**1. The plea is for all quarrelers to agree in the Lord.** The source of the disturbance in the church was due to two prominent ladies in the church: **Euodia** and **Syntyche**. Who they were and what caused the trouble between them is not known. Only one thing is known about them: they were quarrelers—two women who differed and who bickered and argued, criticized and dissented, murmured and grumbled.

**Note what Paul did:** he pleaded for the two ladies to get their minds together **"in the Lord."** As stated in the former point, if a person is living and moving and having his being **"in the Lord,"** then he is walking and serving the Lord. He is consumed with the Lord and His mission. There is no time for arguing and divisiveness. In fact, the very opposite is true. He has time only for joining hands with others who are living and moving in the Lord—all seeking to fulfill the Lord's mission upon earth. A person walking in the Lord is consumed with keeping the presence of the Lord alive in his heart and life. His thoughts are upon the Lord and His mission, not upon differences with other believers and arguing and divisiveness.

2. The need is for a true friend, a yokefellow, to step in and help any who are quarreling. The word **"yokefellow"** (*suzuge*) is thought by some to be a proper name given to some Christians when they were baptized. It was a common practice for believers to be given new names at their baptism in order to symbolize their spiritual birth. Just who this yokefellow was is not known, but he must have been a man deeply respected by the people of the church. His name refers to the *yoke* or *collar* that was fitted around the neck of oxen for plowing. The collar attached the plow and held the two oxen together so that they would pull together and more quickly get the work done.

Therefore, **"yokefellow"** means a person who pulls and works cooperatively with others. The very fact that Paul would ask him to help the two quarreling ladies shows that he was highly esteemed. Paul felt that he cared and that the two quarrelers would listen to him—that he could solve the dispute and bring about reconciliation.

**Thought 1.** Most churches have one or more yokefellows, **persons.....**

1. who love and care deeply for others.
2. who are always helping and ministering to others.
3. whom God has gifted and appointed to be ministerial helpers to the flock.
4. who are highly respected and esteemed by most in the congregation.

The yokefellow is the person who should step in when quarrels and divisiveness begin to arouse their poisonous heads. The yokefellow is the person especially gifted by God to bring reconciliation and peace to the church.

**Note:** a message is given to the yokefellow as well as to the two quarrelers. The yokefellow is to help; helping is not an option. God has called and gifted him with a loving and caring nature that was especially suited for this kind of ministry. Therefore, he was to use his gift by stepping forward and doing his best to bring reconciliation and peace.

**Note also: there are two other reasons why he must help.**

- a. The quarrelers were co-laborers in the gospel. They had helped Paul and Clement and others in the church. They needed to be serving in the gospel, not arguing and differing. Therefore, every effort possible had to be exerted in trying to salvage them.
- b. Second, their names were in the Book of Life. They were true believers who had slipped back into a life of sinful divisiveness. Despite their sin, they were true believers; therefore, every effort needed to be made to restore them.

**"With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" ([Ephes. 6:7](#)).**

**"But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all" ([Mark 10:43-44](#)).**

**"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise" ([Luke 10:36-37](#)).**

**"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" ([John 13:14](#)).**

**"He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep" ([John 21:16](#)).**

**"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves" ([Romans 15:1](#)).**

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" ([Galatians 6:1-2](#)).

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" ([Galatians 6:10](#)).

"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men" ([1 Thes. 5:14](#)).

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" ([Hebrews 12:28](#)).

"Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God" ([Jeremiah 3:22](#)).

"I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him" ([Hosea 14:4](#)).

"He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" ([Micah 7:19](#)).

### **3. ([Philippians 4:4](#)) Rejoicing: the third step to peace is that of rejoicing in the Lord.**

**Note** that a person is to rejoice always, that is, continually; and then he is to rejoice again, that is, repeatedly.

Remember: Paul is in prison and the church is having a problem with some false teaching. Yet, Paul tells the believers that they are to walk about rejoicing in the Lord. In fact they are to rejoice in the Lord always—no matter the circumstances.

### **4. ([Philippians 4:5](#)) Moderation—Gentleness: the fourth step to peace is a strong gentleness.**

The word "**moderation**" (*epieikēs*) is a difficult word to translate into English. It is translated by others as gentleness, forbearance, reasonableness, consideration, agreeableness, courtesy, patience, and softness. There is a tendency to say that either forbearance or gentleness is the better translation. Barclay says that the word has the idea of justice in it, but that the meaning goes beyond and claims that there is *something better than justice*—a gracious gentleness.

**1. Believers are to be gentle and forbearing in dealing with unbelievers.** Note the phrase, "**all men.**" The exhortation not only deals with believers within the church, but with unbelievers. Barclay makes an excellent exposition of this point:



*"The Christian, as Paul sees it, is the man who knows that for him there is something beyond justice. When the woman taken in adultery was brought before Him, Jesus could have applied the letter of the Law, and she should, according to it, have been stoned; but He went beyond justice. As far as justice goes, there is not one of us who deserves anything but the condemnation of God, but God goes far beyond justice. Paul lays it down that the mark of a Christian in his personal relationships with his fellow-men must be that he knows when, and when not, to insist on justice, and that he always remembers that there is something which is beyond justice, and which makes a man like God" ([The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians](#), p.94.)*

**Thought 1.** The point is well-taken: we must be gentle and forbearing in dealing with unbelievers. The last thing we must do is criticize, condemn, censor, neglect, and ignore unbelievers. We must reach out to the world with the gospel and treat them with a *loving gentleness*. We must be gentle, having absolutely nothing to do with harshness. Too many of us are harsh and critical or neglectful and withdrawn. Too many of us are wrapped in the cloak of religion having nothing to do with reaching out to the lost. The desperate need of the hour is for us to reach out with the gospel in a spirit of *love* and *gentleness*.

**"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" ([Ephes. 4:2](#)).**

**"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" ([Col. 3:13](#)).**

**"But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children" ([1 Thes. 2:7](#)).**

**"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" ([2 Tim. 2:24](#)).**

**"To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men" ([Titus 3:2](#)).**

**"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" ([James 3:17](#)).**

**2. The reason we must be gentle to men is because the Lord is at hand.** He is ready to come, and His coming is near. This simply means that when He comes, everyone of us will need Him to treat us with gentleness. We are sinners—men and women, boys and girls—who sin too often. The Lord will have every right to be critical and condemning of us. Our only hope is that He will be gentle with us. Therefore, we must be gentle with all other men. Only if we are forgiving toward them will the Lord be forgiving toward us.

**"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" ([Ephes. 4:32](#)).**

**"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" ([Matthew 6:12](#)).**

**"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" ([Matthew 6:14-15](#)).**

**"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" ([Mark 11:25](#)).**

**"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" ([Luke 6:38](#)).**

**"And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" ([Luke 17:4](#)).**

# THE SECRET OF PEACE—THE PEACE OF GOD HIMSELF, [Philippians 4:1-9](#)

## B. The Steps to Peace (Part II): Prayer and Positive Thinking, [Philippians 4:6-9](#)

**([Philippians 4:6-9](#)) Introduction:** remember we are answering a question—once we possess the peace of God, how do we maintain the peace? (See note—[Phil. 4:1-5](#) for more discussion.) Once we have made *peace with God*, then the peace of God floods our lives. How do we maintain that peace? How do we keep the *peace of God* ruling and reigning within our souls? How do we keep a consciousness of God's very own presence within us—an awareness that the "**God of peace**" lives within our very being? This passage discusses two of the most important steps to possessing peace. Above all other passages, it tells us how to have peace and how to maintain peace. If we will take these two steps, the peace of God will rule and reign in our hearts and lives. We will never lose our peace or be without peace.

1. **Peace comes through prayer (v.6-7).**
2. **Peace comes through positive thinking (v.8-9).**

### 1. ([Philippians 4:6-7](#)) Peace—Prayer—Anxiety: peace comes through prayer.

**Note three significant points.**

1. There is the charge: be anxious (*merimnate*) about nothing. The idea is that the believer is not to worry or fret about a single thing. The word "**nothing**" (*mēden*) means not even one thing. Humanly speaking, the Philippians had every reason to worry and be anxious.

- a. They were suffering severe persecution ([Phil. 1:18-19](#)).
- b. They were facing a disturbance in the church, some disunity and quarreling ([Phil. 1:27, 42](#)).
- c. They had some carnal members within their fellowship, some members who were prideful, super-spiritual, and self-centered ([Phil. 2:3-4](#); [Phil. 3:12](#)).
- d. They were facing some false teachers who had joined their fellowship, and the teachers were fierce in attacking the cross of Christ ([Phil. 3:2-3, 18-19](#)).
- e. Some of the believers were having to struggle for the necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter ([Phil. 4:19](#)).

There was little else that could confront these dear believers. They were facing about every trial and temptation imaginable, the kind of trouble that arouses anxiety and worry.

**Humanly, a person is going to fret, worry and suffer anxiety.....**

- a. when he is either about to lose or lacks food, clothing, or shelter.
- b. when he is persecuted, ridiculed, abused, or threatened.
- c. when he is surrounded by quarrels, disturbance, carnality, or false teaching.

In the midst of such circumstances, the only way a person can keep from worrying is to receive an injection of supernatural power.

This is the very point of Scripture. There is an answer to worry and anxiety, a supernatural answer: the peace of God. God will *enable* the believer to conquer worry and anxiety. God will overcome the trials of life for the believer, no matter how terrible and pressuring they may be. God will infuse the believer with peace—with the very peace of God Himself—a peace so great and so wonderful that it carries the believer right through the trial. Of course, this does not mean the believer is not to be concerned about the problems of life. He is, but there is a difference between concern and anxiety or worry. Concern drives us to arise and tackle the problems of life with an indomitable courage and diligence. Concern drives us to tackle and conquer all that we can handle.

**Anxiety and worry cause all kinds of problems.....**

- 1. fear to act
- 2. withdrawal
- 3. hesitation
- 4. cowardice
- 5. depression
- 6. discouragement
- 7. a defeatist attitude
- 8. distrust and unbelief
- 9. quick, unplanned action
- 10. unwise and harmful decisions
- 11. physical sickness and infirmities
- 12. emotional problems
- 13. spiritual backsliding

Of course the list could go on and on, but the point to see is the seriousness of anxiety and worry. Just take a moment and think about a few of the above problems: how anxiety and worry cause a person to act and suffer. The seriousness is easily seen. We all know people who suffer greatly because of anxiety and worry; they simply lack the peace of God. Yet, the charge of Scripture is forceful: be anxious for nothing, not even for a single thing.

**"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles [unbelievers] seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first**

the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" ([Matthew 6:31-33](#)).

"And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things" ([Luke 10:41](#)).

"And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind" ([Luke 12:29](#)).

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares" ([Luke 21:34](#)).

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 4:6-7](#)).

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" ([Hebrews 13:5](#)).

"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" ([1 Peter 5:7](#)).

2. The remedy for anxiety and worry: prayer. The four words used for prayer show exactly how prayer is the answer to anxiety and worry.

- a. The word "**prayer**" (*proseuchē*) refers to the special times of prayer that we share in periods of devotion and worship. We are to have set times for prayer, times that we especially set aside for devotion and worship.
- b. The word "**supplication**" (*deēsis*) refers to the prayers that focus upon special needs. We feel a deep, intense need, therefore, we go before God and *supplicate*, that is, pour out our soul to God. Need—great need—confronts us, and the only possible help and deliverance is God. Therefore, we come and lay our need before Him as a child: crying, pleading and begging for His help, comfort, deliverance, and peace.
- c. The word "**thanksgiving**" (*eucharistia*) means that we thank and praise God for all that He is and for all that He has done for us.
- d. The word "**requests**" (*aitēmata*) means specific and definite requests. Our praying is not to be general, but specific. We are to lay before God exactly what is needed and we are not to fear that we are being too detailed with God or bothering God. Neither are we to hold back from asking because we fear He will not answer something so specific. Too often believers fear not receiving the answer to a specific request, fear that it will show how weak they are spiritually if the request is not granted.

Note what Scripture says: "**In everything**" pray like this—use all four ways of praying and use them in praying for everything.

**This means two things.**

- a. We are to walk in God—live, move, and have our being in Him—and we do this *by prayer*. We live and move in God through prayer. We pray "**in everything**"—all day long as we walk and move about our daily affairs.
1. We *pray* in times that are specifically set aside for devotion and worship.
  2. We *supplicate*—struggle in prayer—when facing times of deep and intense need.
  3. We offer *thanksgiving* (and praise) all day long as we walk and move about.
  4. We offer our *requests*—specific requests—to God. We ask Him to do definite things as we walk throughout the day.

As stated, we walk in God—live, move, and have our being in Him; and the way we do this is through prayer.

- b. We are to pray about every thing no matter how small and insignificant it may seem. God is interested in the details of our lives, in the most minute details. He wants us acknowledging Him in *all our ways* or steps because He wants to care and look after every single step.

Now picture the scene: we are walking throughout the day, sharing with God every step of the way, and God is taking care of every step of the way. What then can take the peace of God away from us? Absolutely nothing! For as we walk in prayer and fellowship with God, God is infusing us with His presence and peace. No matter the conflict or trial, we are continuing to share with God and God is continuing to infuse us with His peace. Through prayer He is giving us the peace to conquer and walk through the trial. Our relationship with God and His peace is unbroken.

**"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" ([Matthew 7:7](#)).**

**"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" ([Matthew 26:41](#)).**

**"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" ([Luke 18:1](#)).**

**"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" ([Luke 21:36](#)).**

**"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" ([Ephes. 6:18](#)).**

**"Pray without ceasing" ([1 Thes. 5:17](#)).**

3. The promise: peace. Peace (*eirēnē*) means to be bound, joined, and woven together. It means to be assured, confident, and secure in the love and care of God.

**It means to have a sense, a consciousness, a knowledge that God will.....**

1. provide
2. guide
3. strengthen
4. sustain
5. save
6. deliver
7. encourage
8. give real life both now and forever

A person can experience the peace of God only as he walks and moves about in prayer. Why? Because only God can *deliver man* through the most severe circumstances and tragedies of life; only God can *infuse assurance and security* within the human soul.

**The wonderful promise about the peace of God is twofold.**

- a. **First**, the peace of God passes all understanding. It is beyond anything we can ask or think. It surpasses all our imaginations. Think of the most terrible situation you can imagine; then think of the peace you would want as you went through that trial. In actual experience, the peace of God is far greater than anything you could ever imagine or understand. The peace of God actually carries the faithful believer through the very midst of trial and tribulation.
- b. **Second**, the peace of God keeps our hearts and minds. The word "**shall keep**" (*phrouresei*) is a military word meaning to garrison, to keep guard and protect. The peace of God is like a most elite soldier who guards and protects the most precious possession of God: the believer's heart and mind.

However, note that God can keep us only as we are "**in Christ Jesus.**" We can know the peace of God only if we have trusted Christ as our Lord and Savior and only if we walk in fellowship with Him. To be in Christ means to walk in Christ—to live, move and have our being in Him.

**"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" ([John 14:27](#)).**

**"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" ([John 16:33](#)).**

**"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" ([Romans 5:1](#)).**

**"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" ([Romans 8:6](#)).**

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" ([Romans 14:17](#)).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)).

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" ([Isaiah 26:3](#)).

"The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace" ([Psalm 29:11](#)).

## 2. ([Philippians 4:8-9](#)) Mind— Thoughts— Thinking Positive: peace comes through positive thinking.

The word "**think**" (*logizesthe*) means to consider, reflect, reason, and ponder. The idea is that of focusing our thoughts until they shape our behavior.

### The truth is:

- a. what we think is what we become.
- b. where we have kept our minds is where we are.
- c. our thoughts shape our behavior.
- d. what we do is what we think.

**William Barclay** says, "...it is a law of life that, if a man thinks of something often enough and long enough, he will come to the stage when he cannot stop thinking about it. His thoughts will be quite literally in a groove out of which he cannot jerk them" (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.97).

A person who centers his thoughts upon the world and its things will live for the world and its things: money, wealth, lands, property, houses, possessions, position, power, recognition, honor, social standing, fame, and a host of other worldly pursuits.

### Very simply stated, a person who centers his thoughts.....

- a. upon the flesh and its lusts will live to satisfy the flesh through such things as pride, self, greed, pleasure, and sex.
- b. upon the eyes and its lusts will live to satisfy the eyes and its lusts through such things as the immoral, pornographic filth flaunted in magazines, films, books, and television; the exposing of the human body; dressing to attract attention; looking a second time.
- c. upon the pride of life will live to satisfy such things as the desire for recognition, honor, position, and authority.

A mind set upon the world and the flesh is what leads to anxiety and worry, emptiness and restlessness. This was the stress of the former point ([Phil. 4:6-7](#)). A worldly mind never knows peace—not true peace, not the peace of God. God will just never allow a



worldly mind to have peace, for it is the restlessness of the human soul that He uses to reach men for salvation.

**The point is this:** when a person accepts Jesus Christ, his mind is renewed by the Spirit of God.

**"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" ([Romans 12:2](#)).**

**"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" ([Ephes. 4:23-24](#)).**

**"And have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" ([Col. 3:10](#)).**

Once a person has been converted to Christ and becomes a new man, he is to focus his thoughts upon the good things of life and upon God. He is to give his mind to **positive thinking**. In fact, he is to think only positive thoughts. The believer is never to allow an immoral, fleshly, worldly, selfish, sinful or evil thought to enter his mind. There is never to be a negative thought whatsoever in the mind of the believer. Sinful and negative thoughts disrupt and destroy peace. For this reason, the believer is to struggle to conquer his mind and thoughts. He is to exert every cell of energy possible to captivate and control every thought. What we think is so important that God tells us what we are to think.

1. The charge is to think and practice positive thinking.

a. **"Whatsoever things are true" (*alēthēs*):** real and genuine.

Many things in the world seems to be true, but they are not; they are false and deceptive, an illusion, and a counterfeit. They seem to offer peace, but what they offer is a deceptive, a counterfeit peace—only escapism. We are to keep our minds upon things that are true, and we are to live lives that are true to both men and God. When our thoughts and lives are centered upon true things, peace comes to the human heart.

b. **"Whatsoever things are honest" (*semna*):** honorable, worthy, revered, highly respected, and noble. Barclay says: "The word really describes that which has the dignity of holiness upon it. There are things in this world which are flippant and cheap, things which are attractive to the light-minded; but it is on the things which are grave and serious and dignified that the Christian will set his mind" (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.98).

c. **"Whatsoever things are just" (*dikaia*):** right and righteous behavior. It has to do with right behavior toward man and God.

The believer is to keep his thoughts upon his duty toward men and God—upon doing what is right toward both. Man is to be a responsible being while on earth. He is responsible for the earth and his fellow human beings, and he is to be held accountable by God for both. Therefore, he is not to focus his thoughts upon comfort and selfish pleasures and pursuits. He is to focus his thoughts upon the things that are ***just and righteous***. He owes his thoughts and mind to the world and to his fellow men and especially to God. He owes whatever contribution he can make to the world and to God. A mind filled **with *just and righteous*** thoughts will know peace.

- d. **"Whatsoever things are pure" (*hagna*)**: morally clean, spotless, stainless, chaste, undefiled, free from moral pollution, filth, dirt, and impurities.  
The believer's mind and thoughts are to be pure—every thought.
- e. **"Whatsoever things are lovely" (*prophilē*)**: pleasing, winsome, kind, gracious; things that excite love and kindness.  
The believer's thoughts are not to be thoughts of unkindness and meanness, grumbling and murmuring, criticism and reaction. The believer's thoughts are to be focused upon things that are lovely—that build people up, not tear them down.
- f. **"Whatsoever things are of good report" (*euphēma*)**: reputable, high-toned, worthy things; things of the highest quality.  
The believer is to think only upon worthy things. He is not to fill his mind with junk; he is not to listen to ***bad reports***, no matter how juicy they may seem. Neither is he to fill his mind with junk, whether through rumor, radio, television, music, off-colored jokes, or by whatever source. His thoughts are to be focused only upon worthy things—only upon that which is of good report.
- g. **"If there be any virtue [excellence] (*aretē*) and if there be any praise [in any thought] (*epainos*)**, think on these things." Positive thinking is the answer to peace for the Christian believer.

2. The source or power for **positive thinking is twofold**.

- a. There is the Word of God. Paul says that he had preached and taught the very virtues of positive thinking to the Philippians and that they had learned them. What Paul had preached and taught was the will of God; therefore, the source or power for positive thinking comes from the Word of God. It is in the Word of God that a person finds the things that are to fill his mind. His thoughts are to be upon the teachings of God's Word.

**"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" ([Col. 3:16](#)).**

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" ([2 Tim. 3:16](#)).

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" ([Hebrews 4:12](#)).

"The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes" ([Psalm 19:8](#)).

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word" ([Psalm 119:9](#)).

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" ([Psalm 119:11](#)).

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" ([Psalm 119:105](#)).

- b. There are noble examples. Paul says that he lived as a testimony before the Philippians. Therefore, they could follow his example because he kept his thoughts and life upon the very virtues of positive thinking.

"Brethren be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample" ([Phil. 3:17](#)).

"For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you" ([2 Thes. 3:7](#)).

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" ([2 Tim. 1:13](#)).

"But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience" ([2 Tim. 3:10](#)).

3. There is the energy and power of self-effort and discipline. **Note the words**, "Those things...do." The believer is expected to control and discipline his mind. He is to struggle against all sinful and negative thoughts, and fight to think only positive thoughts. Note the result of positive thinking: the God of peace shall be with the believer.

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit" ([Romans 8:5](#)).

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" ([Romans 12:2](#)).

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" ([1 Cor. 2:16](#)).

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" ([2 Cor. 10:5](#)).

**"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" ([Phil. 4:8](#)).**

**"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" ([Ephes. 4:23-24](#)).**

**"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee" ([Isaiah 26:3](#)).**

# THE APPRECIATION FOR GOOD CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS, Philippians 4:10-23

## A. Appreciation: For a Church That Revives Its Sacrificial Giving, Philippians 4:10-19

**(Philippians 4:10-19) Introduction:** this passage deals with stewardship, in particular the giving of money to meet the needs of ministers and missions or the spread of the gospel to the world. Remember: Paul is in prison facing the false charge of insurrection against the government. He is facing the death penalty if convicted. The Philippians had heard about his plight, and they had heard how Paul was standing fast and continuing to preach the gospel to everyone who visited him. The church was stirred to do two things: to take up a love offering and to send a man, Epaphroditus, to minister to Paul's needs.

This passage is Paul's appreciation for a church that is stirred to revive its interest in missions—stirred to begin giving *once again* to the support of God's ministers worldwide.

1. **Their giving was revived and it flourished (v.10).**
2. **Their giving was not necessary, but it was needed (v.11-14).**
3. **Their giving was distinctive: they were the only church that gave and they gave consistently (v.15-16).**
4. **Their giving was sacrificial and it was seen and rewarded by God (v.17-19).**

### 1. (Philippians 4:10) Stewardship— Giving: the church revived its giving and its giving flourished.

Note the words "**flourished again**" (*anethalete*): it means "**to revive again**". It is the picture of plants and flowers sprouting, shooting up, and blossoming *again*. The key word is *again*. When the church had been founded, the believers had supported Paul and his mission work on a regular basis. But for some reason they had dropped their mission support. That had probably been over ten to twelve years before (Strauss). Why they had stopped sending support to Paul is not known. However, the point to see is the glorious revival of mission support that took place in the church. They picked up the support of Paul once again, and their giving flourished and blossomed anew. The joy and rejoicing of Paul's heart can just be imagined. He says, "**I rejoiced in the Lord greatly.**"

**Thought 1.** Why had the church dropped its mission support of Paul? As stated, the reason is not known. In his gracious and kind way, Paul just passes over the issue by saying that he knew they cared for him, but they had just lacked opportunity to support him.

**Was their lack of support.....**

1. legitimate: that is, due to persecution or poverty?
2. illegitimate: that is, due to neglect and unconcern for the spread of the gospel and missions world-wide?

Being honest about the matter, it is difficult to conceive of a legitimate reason for dropping mission support. It is especially difficult to see a reason that would last as long as the ten to twelve years that the Philippian church had failed to support Paul. Whether legitimate or not, we all need to search our hearts about our own personal support of God's ministers and missions world-wide.

- a. The gospel must be supported.
- b. The gospel must be carried world-wide.
- c. The need of the hour is for churches to awaken to the world-wide mission of Christ.
- d. Preachers, that is, ministers, missionaries, teachers, and evangelists—all of God's appointed preachers and teachers—must be supported as they carry the gospel to the world.

**Note this:** it has been centuries heaped upon centuries since Jesus Christ came to die for the sins of men and to give them life. Yet, look at how little has been done—at how many have still not heard or believed.

⇒ Where are the laborers to carry the message? Where are those who actually pray for laborers as He instructed? Look at how many stay at home and then look at the few out in the communities and fields of the world ministering and witnessing to the lost. Is this God's method? His will? Thought and honesty give us the answer. The problem is not that we don't know the truth. We know the truth: we know that we are to go. The problem is that we do not go. We are just unwilling to commit ourselves to go. We are unwilling to leave the comfort and security of our homes and offices, jobs and families to go into the communities and nations of the world.

The need of the hour is for laborers—laborers who will do exactly what Christ commanded: **"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"** ([Mark 16:15](#)). And if we cannot go, then we must commit ourselves to support those who are willing to go!

**"Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few" ([Matthew 9:37](#)).**

**"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest" ([Luke 10:2](#)).**

**"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" ([Luke 14:33](#)).**

**"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together" ([John 4:35-36](#)).**

## **2. ([Philippians 4:11-14](#)) Stewardship— Ministers— Provision: the church's giving was not necessary, but it was needed.**

Very simply, what this means is that God will take care of His dear servant even if churches do not adequately care for him. Down through the centuries most churches have not adequately cared for their ministers. This has been part of the sufferings most ministers have to bear in order to carry the gospel forth to a world reeling in desperate need. Yet, God's dear servants have gone forth despite whatever suffering they have had to bear.

### **Note three significant points.**

**1. Giving is not necessary because God teaches His servants to be content, no matter the circumstances ([Phil. 4:11-12](#)).** The word "content" (*autarkēs*) means "to be self-sufficient; to be completely detached from circumstances." Note the word "learned." It was a learning experience. Paul had to learn to conquer circumstances and not to let circumstances worry him.

#### **But note: he had learned contentment. He says three descriptive things:**

- a. that he knew how to be abased (to live humbly with little) and how to abound (to live with plenty and prosperity).
- b. that he knew the *secret* to facing every situation, whether being full or going hungry.
- c. that he knew how to abound (live in plenty) and how to suffer need.

Lehman Strauss says:

*"In those early days of my Christian experience I could not see how some Christians I knew could be content with so little of this world's goods. I sincerely trust that I am learning the secret. From what I see about me I do not hesitate to say that it is a secret many Christians have yet to learn. Paul needed to learn it. He said, 'I have learned....' The lesson of contentment was one he learned by degrees in varying circumstances. As a young unbelieving Jew, he had no want insofar as this world's possessions are concerned. He did not always know the divine provision of satisfaction, but after he was saved he came to learn it, not in the academic classroom, but as the result of a lengthy experience of trials and discipline, 'I have learned' is the language of a good student. Have you learned to be satisfied with your place and position and possessions in this life?" ([Devotional Studies in Philippians](#), p.321.)*

What was the secret Paul had learned? It is the next point.

**"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" ([Phil. 4:11](#)).**

**"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" ([1 Tim. 6:6-10](#)).**

**"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" ([Hebrews 13:5](#)).**

**2. Giving is not necessary because the minister can do all things through Christ who strengthens him ([Phil. 4:13](#)).**

**Note the verse:**

**"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" ([Phil. 4:13](#)).**

God's servant (minister) can be content in all circumstances no matter how severe they are—through Christ—but he cannot be content in any circumstance apart from Christ.

**Note exactly what the verse says:**

- a. "I can...through Christ"
- b. "Christ who strengthens me"

Christ does not do everything for the believer; neither does the believer do everything for himself. Both Christ and the believer have a part in conquering circumstances. The believer declares, "**I can,**" and he gets up and faces the circumstances head on. It is then that Christ steps in and strengthens the believer. Christ infuses strength into the believer *while the believer* is tackling the problem.

Facing reality, there is no need for strength unless the believer is facing and struggling against the circumstance.

- a. The believer does not need extra strength to arise and face the circumstance. Any believer, no matter who he is, has the strength himself to arise and face any circumstance that confronts him.
- b. The believer does not even need strength to begin struggling to conquer and solve the circumstance. He has the strength himself to fight against the circumstance that confronts him.

It is only when the believer has exhausted what he can do that a special infusion of the strength of Christ is needed. Christ steps in when our strength is no longer sufficient. It is then that He is able to demonstrate His wonderful love and care for His dear servant.



**Note something else as well:** all praise and glory is then due Christ and not man. Giving is not necessary; God will provide and care for His dear servant.

**"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me, Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:9-10).**

**"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).**

**"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8).**

**"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Ephes. 3:16).**

**"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).**

**"So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:6).**

**"The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him" (Psalm 28:7).**

**"But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God" (Psalm 40:17).**

**"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10).**

**3. However, giving is needed, and it is work well done (Phil. 4:14).** The minister needs daily provision and the gospel needs to be supported so that it can be carried around the world. Money and support are greatly needed. They are not necessary; God can take care of His dear servants and the gospel with or without any church. But His will is for every single church to become involved in supporting His servants and world-wide missions. God can do the job without us; God can bypass us and put us on the shelf just like a useless book. But He wants His people to give and give generously. When they do, they perform a work that is well done, that is commendable and noble.

**"I have showed you all things how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).**

**"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" ([Galatians 6:9-10](#)).**

### **3. ([Philippians 4:15-16](#)) Stewardship— Minister— Missions: the church's giving was distinctive—they were the only church that gave and they gave consistently.**

**This is a point that desperately needs to be heeded by churches everywhere.** When the Philippian church was founded, it underwrote the ministry of Paul and it was consistent in its support. **But note:** it was the only church that was supporting Paul. The unfaithfulness of the other churches cut Paul's heart. This is clear from his words that no church supported him—none except the Philippian church.

It was while he was in Thessalonica that the Philippians had been consistent in their mission support. And how he had needed their support in Thessalonica, for it was there that he had faced severe persecution ([Acts 17:1f](#)).

**Thought 1.** Imagine! Just one church supporting Paul and his mission to the world! And that church was a church that had just been founded. Two questions desperately need to be asked by all of us.

- 1) What are we doing for the Paul's and missions of today?
- 2) Have we made a commitment to support any minister or mission and backed off the commitment?

**"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven" ([Matthew 19:23](#)).**

**"And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful" ([Mark 4:19](#)).**

**"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" ([1 Tim. 6:7](#)).**

**"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" ([1 Tim. 6:9](#)).**

**"For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others" ([Psalm 49:10](#)).**

**"Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven" ([Proverbs 23:5](#)).**

**"For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?" ([Proverbs 27:24](#)).**

"As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool" ([Jeremiah 17:11](#)).

#### 4. ([Philippians 4:17-19](#)) **Stewardship— Mission: the church's giving was sacrificial, and it was seen and rewarded by God.**

The gift cost the Philippian church. They were a church that gave, not just a percentage (so to speak) but sacrificially.

**This is seen in two points.** Their gift is said to be a definite *sacrifice*, acceptable and well pleasing to God. Their gift is also said to have created a *need* among themselves. But Paul answers them, "God shall supply all your needs...." ([Phil. 4:19](#)).

**Note three points.**

**1. God saw who sacrificially gave to support Paul and He deposited a reward to their account ([Phil. 4:17](#)).** This was what Paul desired in giving: not a gift for himself, but a reward for the giver. Paul knew that God saw and rewarded the believers who gave sacrificially; therefore, Paul desired believers to give and to give sacrificially.

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" ([Matthew 6:20](#)).

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" ([Matthew 19:21](#)).

"Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" ([Luke 12:33](#)).

"Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" ([Luke 18:30](#)).

**2. God was well pleased with the giving of the Philippians ([Phil. 4:18](#)).** Paul compares it to an Old Testament sacrifice which a person offered up to God. The person's sacrificial commitment to God was just like the *pleasant smell* of the animal sacrifice: it was acceptable. The sacrificial commitment was a sweet or pleasant smell to God. So it was and is with sacrificial giving. The commitment of the gift is acceptable to God just like the pleasant smell of an animal sacrifice.

"But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God" ([Phil. 4:18](#)).

"But to do good and to communicate [give] forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" ([Hebrews 13:16](#)).

**"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, and holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).**

**3. God promised to supply all the needs of His dear people (Phil. 4:19).**

This is one of the great promises of Scripture:

**"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).**

- a. **There is the great Provider: *God Himself*.** No matter what the need is, the need is not greater than God. God can and will meet the need. But note the pronoun "**my**." It is "**my God**" who shall provide for the needs. A person has to make sure...
  - 1. that the God who can really provide for needs is his God.
  - 2. that he knows God personally—well enough that he can trust and depend upon God to meet his need.
  
- b. **There is the great assurance of provision: "my God shall supply."** There is no question about the provision being supplied. God is God; therefore, He is able to provide and He will supply whatever provision His dear child needs.
  
- c. **There is the great provision: "all your needs."** This promise does not refer only to the physical needs for food, clothing, and shelter. It refers to mental, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. It refers to any need that arises, engulfs, or confronts the believer. No need will be omitted or overlooked. No need is too big or too little. No need is unimportant—not to God, not if His dear child is really experiencing the need.
  - a. There may be a lesson for the believer to learn before the need can be met, some lesson such as more trust, endurance, love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, or control.
  - b. There may be some testimony that the believer needs to share as to the strength of Christ which carries us through trials.

But no matter what the trial or need is, God will supply all our needs.

- d. **There is the great *resource*: "according to His riches in glory."** Take all the riches and wealth, glory and majesty of heaven—it is all available to meet the needs of God's dear people. There is no limit—not even a fraction—to the great resources at God's disposal. God can provide for any need.
  
- e. **There is the great Mediator: "By Christ Jesus."** This is critical to note, for God does nothing apart from Christ. No person can approach God without coming to Him through Christ Jesus. This is the key to having our needs met:

surrendering our lives to Jesus Christ, and asking God to meet our needs in Him. We must always remember that God has only one child: the Lord Jesus Christ. God loves Christ so much that He will do anything for the person who honors Christ by sacrificially giving to share the glorious news about Him.

**"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" ([2 Cor. 9:8](#)).**

**"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" ([Luke 6:38](#)).**

**"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" ([Ephes. 3:20](#)).**

**"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 4:19](#)).**

**"And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" ([1 Tim. 1:14](#)).**

**"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" ([2 Tim. 4:8](#)).**

**"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" ([2 Peter 1:11](#)).**

**"Fear thou not; For I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" ([Isaiah 41:10](#)).**

# THE APPRECIATION FOR GOOD CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS, Philippians 4:10-23

## B. Appreciation: For God and for Fellow Christians, Philippians 4:20-23

**(Philippians 4:20-23) Introduction:** the great *Letter of Philippians* is now being closed. But before it is closed, one more thing must be done. Appreciation must be expressed—appreciation for God and for fellow Christian believers.

1. **God is to be praised as God and as our Father (v.20).**
2. **Believers are to salute every saint (v.21-22).**
3. **Believers are to wish the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ upon each other (v.23).**

### 1. (Philippians 4:20) God— Praise: God is to be praised as God and as our Father.

1. **First, God is to be praised as God.** He is God, the Creator and Sovereign Ruler of the universe. God has made all, and He rules and governs all.

- a. He is the only wise God who dwells in majesty and glory, dominion and power (Jude 24-25).
- b. He is the only One who possesses the bottomless depth of wisdom and knowledge, who possesses all the riches of wisdom and knowledge. He is the One whose judgments are unsearchable, and whose ways are past finding out. He is the One who has a mind that no man can know and who has such wisdom that no man can be a counsellor to Him: "**For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen**" (Romans 11:36).
- c. He is the only One who reigns and is clothed with majesty and strength, whose very voice is the embodiment of power and of creation. Before Him are both honor and majesty (Psalm 29:4; Psalm 93:1; Psalm 96:6).
- d. He is the only One whose glory is like a devouring fire (Exodus 24:17). He is the One whose glory is declared by the heavens, and whose handiwork is shown by the firmament (Psalm 19:1).

An eternity of declaration could be proclaimed about God. God is God, and because He is God, He is to be praised as God.

**2. God is to be praised as *our Father*.** Imagine! The Sovereign Majesty of the universe has humbled Himself so much that He has adopted us as His sons and daughters. Just think about the fact. He is the Sovereign Power not only of this earth, but of the whole universe.

**Yet.....**

1. we have criticized, grumbled, and complained about His rule.
2. we have cursed His very name.
3. we have rebelled and rejected Him.
4. we have questioned and denied Him, and even scoffed at the very idea of Him.
5. we have deliberately disobeyed Him.
6. we have chosen to live as we please and to do our own thing instead of following Him.

Just think about our attitude and behavior toward God—toward Him who is the Ruler of the universe in all its glory and vastness. Yet, He has not wiped us out; He has not destroyed us. On the contrary, He has sent His Son into the world to declare that He loves the world and that He wants to reconcile us to Himself. How? Through the death of His Son Jesus Christ. God wants to adopt men and women as sons and daughters through faith in the death of His Son.

This is the ***great humility (or condescension) and mercy of God***—that He, as the Sovereign Ruler of the universe whom we have rejected and cursed so much, would still save and adopt us and let us call Him Father.

The great condescension of God demands one thing: that we praise and glorify Him ***as our Father for ever and ever***.

**"After the manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" ([Matthew 6:9](#)).**

**"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" ([Romans 8:15-17](#)).**

**"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" ([1 Cor. 6:20](#)).**

**"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And**

because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" ([Galatians 4:4-6](#)).

"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" ([Hebrews 13:15](#)).

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" ([1 Peter 2:9](#)).

## **2. (Philippians 4:21-22) Brotherhood— Greeting— Prejudice— Partiality: believers are to salute every saint, that is, every true believer.**

"Saint" (*hagion*) means those who are separated or set apart unto God; those who are different from the person who lives for the world, for its possessions and pleasures. **Note: every saint is to be greeted.** There is to be no discrimination or favoritism shown.

**Among saints there is to be.....**

- |                                   |                             |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. no clique                      | g. no neglect               |
| b. no ignoring                    | h. no snubbing              |
| c. no downgrading                 | i. no separation            |
| d. no withdrawal                  | j. no avoiding              |
| e. no sense of superiority        | k. no sense of pride        |
| f. no sense of super-spirituality | l. no sense of being better |

Poverty, education, handicap, unattractiveness, clothing, social standing, employment, race, nationality—nothing is to cause believers to discriminate or to show partiality and favoritism. All saints are equally acceptable to God. Therefore, all saints are to be greeted by all believers.

**1. Christian leaders are to greet every saint.** Note that "**all the brothers**" with Paul send their greetings. This apparently refers to the ministers who accompanied and served with Paul in his ministry—men such as Timothy and Luke. Paul does not name them, so we do not know who they were. The point to note is that the Christian leaders are to take the lead in greeting *every saint*. If the leader shows discrimination and favoritism, then others in the church will do the same. The minister and other leaders must always demonstrate love, interest, and care *for all*.

**2. All the saints, including government officials, are to greet every saint.** Caesar's household does not necessarily refer to members of Caesar's family. The term is very similar to what we call civil servants, or government employees. As in our day, Rome had its government employees scattered all over the world. But note: Paul was in Rome, so this means that some government officials had been reached for Christ. The lesson for us is that humility must be demonstrated even by those in the echelons of government, no matter how high their position is. Even if a person is in Caesar's household, in the highest



position of government, he must walk humbly before God and greet all the saints, even the lowest saint.

**"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" ([Phil. 2:3-4](#)).**

**"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" ([1 Peter 5:5-6](#)).**

**"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" ([Matthew 18:4](#)).**

**"And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" ([Luke 22:25-26](#)).**

**"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" ([Romans 12:3](#)).**

**"Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" ([Romans 12:16](#)).**

### **3. ([Philippians 4:23](#)) Grace: believers are to wish the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ upon each other.**

**([Ephesians 1:2](#)) Grace (*charis*):** probably the most meaningful word in the language of men. The Bible means something far more than men mean by grace.

**To men the word "grace" means three things.**

1. Grace is that something, that quality within a thing, that is beautiful or joyful. It may be the fragrance of a flower, the rich green of the grass, the beauty of a lovely person.
2. Grace is anything that has loveliness. It may be a thought, an act, a word, a person.
3. Grace is a gift, a favor that someone might extend to a friend. The favor is always freely done, expecting nothing in return, and the favor is always done for a friend.

**In light of this, grace means two very significant things.**

**1. Grace means all the favors and gifts of God.** It means all the good and perfect gifts of God, all the good and beneficial things He gives us and does for us, whether physical, material, or spiritual ([James 1:17](#)).

**"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" ([Ephes. 1:7](#)).**

**"That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" ([Ephes. 2:7](#)).**

**"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" ([Phil. 4:19](#)).**

**"And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" ([1 Tim. 1:14](#)).**

**2. Grace means the favor of God showered upon men—men who did not deserve His favor.** When the early Christians looked at what God had done for men, they had to add a deeper and much richer meaning to the word *grace*. For God had saved sinners, those who had acted against Him.

Grace became the kindness and love that God freely gives to His *enemies*—men who are.....

1. "without strength" ([Romans 5:6](#)).
2. "ungodly" ([Romans 5:6](#)).
3. "sinners" ([Romans 5:8](#)).
4. "enemies" ([Romans 5:10](#)).

No other word so expresses the depth and richness of the heart and mind of God. This is the distinctive difference between God's grace and man's grace. Whereas man sometimes does favors for his friends and thereby can be said to be gracious, God has done a thing unheard of among men: He has given His very own Son to die for His enemies ([Romans 5:8-10](#)).

**a. God's grace is not earned. It is something completely undeserved and unmerited.**

**"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" ([Ephes. 2:8-9](#)).**

**"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" ([Titus 3:4-5](#)).**

b. God's grace is the free gift of God. God extends His grace out toward man.

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" ([Romans 3:24](#)).

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)" ([Ephes. 2:4-5](#)).

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" ([Titus 2:11-14](#)).

c. God's grace is the only way man can be saved.

"If through the offence of one [Adam] many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many" ([Romans 5:15](#)).

"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ" ([1 Cor. 1:4](#)).

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" ([2 Cor. 8:9](#)).

"[Salvation] which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" ([Titus 3:6-7](#)).